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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic
of Macedonia)

later: Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued) (A/50/123-S/1995/228, A/50/254-S/1995/201, A/50/255-S/1995/504,
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(b) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (A/50/8 and Add.1)

(c) UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat II) (A/50/37,
A/50/411, A/50/519)

1. Mr. N'DOW (Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)), speaking also in his capacity as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), said that the changing global political, economic and social environment required that Governments and multilateral organizations adjust development strategies to meet the needs of a transformed world. The United Nations system must attach the highest priority to strengthening human security, developing human potential and thereby building hope. Development of human settlements - both in urban and rural areas - had become a priority challenge for the international community. The forthcoming Conference was part of the continuum of United Nations conferences that had begun at Rio, a continuum that was rewriting the economic, social and, perhaps, political agenda of the international community for the twenty-first century and was providing a more holistic and humane message about global problems and the solutions they required.

2. The preparatory process for the Conference was moving forward vigorously, as 134 countries engaged in national preparatory activities and in initiatives involving all sectors of society. For example, work was under way in more than 100 countries on the "best practices" initiative for improving the living environment, and a conference on the subject was to be held the following week in the municipality of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. More than 100 workshops would be held throughout the world covering a range of relevant issues. Those workshops had been sponsored by international organizations, Governments, local authorities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, community groups and professionals.

3. At the regional level, a recent conference of African ministers responsible for housing and human settlements had unanimously adopted a declaration which testified to the importance which those countries attached to attaining the goals of Habitat II. Similar meetings were planned or had already been held in other regions.

4. The preparatory process had resulted in the forging of many new alliances and partnerships. Perhaps the most significant was the one that had brought together the secretariat of the Conference and the major international and regional associations of local authorities and their steering committee.

5. Preparation of the plan of action to be adopted at the Conference also was well advanced. An informal inter-sessional drafting group comprising

representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations and local authorities from all regions had recently made considerable progress drafting a text which he was confident would win wide support.

6. The outcome of the deliberations of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements had made it clear that Governments looked to the Conference for solutions capable of generating economic growth, alleviating poverty and enhancing the urban environment, for a global plan of action capable of advancing and integrating the goals of the other recent United Nations conferences and for strategies and philosophies of enablement to make the goal of the Conference - better housing for all - a reality. At its second session, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference had recommended, inter alia, approval of a rule of procedure that would allow local authorities to participate in the Conference. He hoped that the recommendation would be adopted.

7. With regard to financing, the Preparatory Committee had called upon countries to increase their contributions to the relevant trust funds and had requested the General Assembly to allocate, within existing United Nations resources, sufficient funds to cover key operational tasks of the Conference. In-kind and earmarked contributions continued to outpace cash contributions and, although the Secretariat had made commendable progress with the limited resources at its disposal, more resources were needed as the preparatory process entered its critical final phase. He was confident that the required support would be forthcoming and was optimistic about the outcome of the Conference, given the political support demonstrated thus far by national and local governments, organizations and people at all levels of society.

8. He looked forward to a Conference of partnerships. For North and South, the future of human settlements would not be determined by bricks and mortar alone. It was human solidarity that would transform the physical environment into homes and settlements. History, geography and social change created the context for human solidarity, rational processes built cities, but faith, loyalty, honour and trust among its members created communal life. He urged the Committee's support to attain that goal.

9. Ms. REBONG (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reiterated the views of those delegations as stated at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements. The Commission should continue to focus on the provision of shelter for all through a comprehensive and integrated approach which viewed urban and rural settlements as integral parts of the development of sustainable human settlements. Access by the poor to critical resources, in particular land and finance, should be addressed. Support should be enhanced for the efforts of the developing countries, in particular, the least developed among them, to provide adequate shelter for their people and the importance of the participation of women in finding solutions to the shelter problem, particularly in the case of households headed by women, should be emphasized.

10. The right to adequate housing as a basic human right was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Notwithstanding the endorsement by the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and by Agenda 21 of the need to

accord priority to programmes for the provision of adequate shelter for all, financial and technical support to that end had been inadequate. Although it was true that national Governments must bear the primary responsibility for the full implementation of the Global Strategy, international support, in particular assistance to enhance the capacity of Governments as facilitators in the shelter sector, was crucial. The two themes of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) were crucial for the implementation of the Global Strategy.

11. Ms. MENENDEZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that improving human settlements and housing conditions was of the utmost importance in efforts to combat urban poverty, unemployment, violence and social disintegration and to protect the environment. It was therefore a central factor for development and played a key role with respect to cultural identity. The States members of the European Union looked forward to the adoption at the Conference of a statement of principles and a global plan of action which promoted sustainable development through a participatory approach, reflected the positions of all involved in the negotiations and clearly set out the political messages on choices that must be made to meet the challenges at hand. They reaffirmed their commitment to that objective. The European Union would continue to participate actively and constructively in the preparations for the Conference and at the Conference itself.

12. The involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and local authorities, in the preparatory process was very important. Local activities to implement Agenda 21 should be acknowledged in the preparations. Since the issue of the right to housing presented difficulties, the proposed expert meeting on the topic should be organized as soon as possible. The Conference should have a practical orientation and should take into account the outcomes of all recent major conferences.

13. Mr. CELEM (Turkey) said that all nations faced problems of urbanization caused by explosive population growth and by the pressures of migration to urban centres. Natural disasters and wars also left many people homeless. The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) should translate the decisions and resolutions of other recent major global conferences into concrete action in support of sustainable development. In that connection, he summarized the overall objectives relating to shelter contained in Agenda 21.

14. It was important to ensure participation at the highest level, and participation should be broadly based. The global plan of action to be adopted by the Conference should present a new orientation and targets which should be translated into commitments and action by all concerned. His delegation hoped that further progress would be made on the draft text of the plan and that the Preparatory Committee would be in a position at its third session to produce a satisfactory document with as few brackets as possible.

15. His country was pleased to host the Conference. Istanbul, the Conference site, would serve as a laboratory for finding solutions to the problems to be discussed at the Conference. The results of its efforts to revive its natural beauty and historic splendour provided a good example of best practices. A broad-based national committee with 140 representatives from various sectors had

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been established to facilitate the preparatory work for the Conference, and a successful regional preparatory meeting had been held at Ankara in October 1995. A host committee had been established to facilitate preparations for the concurrent non-governmental organizations forum to be held during Habitat II. A self-financing international trade fair was being organized and would focus on innovative, low-cost, appropriate and environmentally sound products, services and technologies in the fields of housing, construction and human settlements. Fifteen per cent of the exhibition space would be made available free of charge for use by firms from the least developed countries.

16. Mr. WANG Xuexian (China) said that the solution to the problem of human settlements in the developing countries lay in the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustained economic development. Efforts were also needed to curb population growth and reinforce environmental protection. It would be necessary to mobilize resources from public and private organizations, and both domestic and foreign sources. There was need for vigorous and intensified international cooperation, and developed countries should provide new and additional resources to developing countries and promote the transfer of technology on favourable terms. Women should be enabled to participate effectively and their interests fully taken into account wherever possible.

17. There could not be any uniform model for human settlements. Each country needed to formulate its own strategy and policies in the light of its own specific conditions while following the guidelines of the United Nations instruments on human settlements.

18. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements working in conjunction with other relevant organs should strengthen capacity-building in developing countries in the field of human settlements so as to contribute to the attainment of the goals set forth in the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and the effective implementation of the relevant chapters of Agenda 21. The Centre should also play a leading role in the preparatory process for Habitat II.

19. China had formulated a series of housing and urban development policies in keeping with its actual conditions. It would pursue unrelentingly its efforts to improve the urban environment, control urban population growth, improve the conditions for human settlements and increase employment opportunities.

20. In preparation for Habitat II, China had set up a National Preparatory Committee, dealing with disseminated information on Habitat II through the media and organized various seminars to increase public participation. Housing agencies and civil society were being encouraged to engage in various activities in the field and information on human settlements was being collected and distributed to the public. China had also been drafting its national report and programme of action. As part of the preparatory work for Habitat II, an exhibition on China's achievements in improving the living environment had been held during the Fourth World Conference on Women.

21. Finally, he drew attention to the question of posts for Chinese translators. Although the budget of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements provided for such posts, no Chinese translators had ever been hired.

He hoped that the secretariat would take prompt action to ensure that the Chinese language was treated in a fair manner.

22. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that inasmuch as the issues of society, environment, population, development, women and human settlements were interrelated, Habitat II would be the final link in the chain of international conferences organized by the United Nations, in which the human being was the focus of economic and social development.

23. Egypt stressed the need for sustainable transport systems, which constituted the backbone of the development of human settlements, and especially land transport systems. Emphasis should therefore be given, within the context of international and regional cooperation, to the development of the transport sector in human settlements in developing countries and the provision of the requisite funds.

24. His delegation agreed that particular attention should be given to the problems of cities, but noted that rural development was also important and should not be ignored. He stressed the importance of decentralization and of strengthening the role of local authorities and grass-roots organizations in cooperation with Governments, with the assistance of the international community.

25. The success of the development of human settlements would depend in large measure on the participation of all the main actors in the implementation of the global plan of action to be adopted: the private sector, non-governmental organizations, grass-roots organizations and international organizations. Egypt hoped that the plan of action would focus particular attention on the poorer and more crowded areas of the developing countries, especially in Africa.

26. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Preparatory Committee (A/50/37) for the completion of the preparatory process with a view to arriving at a global plan of action that took into account the problems and needs of every region. It hoped the Committee's third substantive session would be an earnest negotiating process aimed at the drafting of an integrated document covering both objectives and the means for implementing the global plan of action, defining programmes and financing sources. It also hoped that the various agencies and organizations would take that opportunity to make known their commitments within the framework of cooperation with Governments; in that connection he drew attention to the considerable activity of the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC) in the area of advancement of human settlements in the Arab region.

27. Greater concentration on the elimination of poverty was a basic condition for the sustainable development of human settlements. That meant satisfying the needs of low-income groups and providing productive employment opportunities, especially for the youth. International cooperation aimed at the achievement of those goals would bring social integration and stability in human settlements.

28. Egypt had participated actively in the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and in the related follow-up work for the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. It had set up a national

committee on human settlements that was coordinating joint efforts among Government organs, local authorities and non-governmental organizations with a view to effective participation in the preparatory process and in the Conference.

29. Egypt accorded priority to the housing sector in its Government programmes, and had adopted short-, medium- and long-term housing development plans to meet the country's urgent and growing demand for housing. In addition, the Government had taken serious steps to encourage private investment in housing. It was also encouraging private construction and housing associations to establish small human settlements in new Government-planned towns in which the necessary infrastructure work was being carried out, with a view to alleviating the pressure on the major cities.

30. Moreover, the Government was helping young people establish small production units and reclaim desert land for agricultural use for graduates of universities and technical institutes, with a view to establishing productive rural human settlements and reducing the growing demand for administrative jobs. That would help to further conversion to a market economy within the framework of the structural adjustment programme being carried out since 1990. As those projects needed further support and financing, his country welcomed the participation of the private sector, United Nations agencies and international financial institutions in that area, too.

31. Mr. RONNEBERG (Marshall Islands) said that his country, like many others which did not have an Embassy in Nairobi, had been unable to participate in the work of the Preparatory Committee in Nairobi. He expressed concern that no funds had been set aside for such delegations to attend the meetings. Arrangements should be made to accommodate inputs from those who could not be present.

32. The Marshall Islands continued to face tremendous problems in those areas of the country which had been contaminated by nuclear testing. His country was seeking assistance in three main areas. Firstly, there was need to improve and to disseminate information on radiation levels present in the environment. Secondly, there was a need for further research into the adverse health implications of radiation exposure on human beings, including a study on the different ways radiation affected men, women and children. Lastly, and most important, was a need to restore the environment of irradiated lands to internationally acceptable levels for human habitation, taking into account the principle of "the polluter pays". In pursuing those concerns, his delegation intended to be guided by internationally negotiated and accepted texts. He hoped that the international community would support such proposals, and that there would be a renewed commitment to the implementation of the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development relating to the provision of a safe and sustainable human environment.

33. Mr. HALIM (India) said that efforts to improve human settlements should take into account the needs of both urban and rural areas. The overall strategy must comprise a mix of measures including promoting sustainable land-use planning and management, providing integrated environmental infrastructure,

promoting sustainable energy and transport systems, human resource development and capacity-building and improving human settlement management.

34. His Government had contributed US\$ 100,000 to the trust fund to facilitate the preparatory process of the Conference scheduled to be held in Istanbul in 1996, in addition to its annual financial contribution to Habitat. It was also finalizing details for a meeting on access to land and security of tenure which it would be hosting in New Delhi from 17 to 19 January 1996. As part of its own national preparations, India was involved in finalizing the national report through a participatory process involving wide debate and consultation. India had also submitted case-studies to the Habitat II secretariat. It was actively preparing for participation in the world fair on building materials and technology scheduled for Istanbul during the Habitat II Conference. He hoped that the international community would provide the necessary financial and technological resources to support the efforts of the developing countries in meeting the challenge.

35. Mrs. ULLOA (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the members of the Rio Group, said that the strong attendance at the recent session of the Preparatory Committee demonstrated the importance that the international community attached to the problem of human settlements. Dealing with the poverty, environmental degradation, unemployment and other negative factors that persisted in both the industrialized and the developing countries would require a global response and the involvement of many different elements, including Government, community-based organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Recent United Nations conferences had touched on the issue of human settlements in their programmes of action and had suggested practical solutions for achieving sustainable development and called for the implementation of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. She stressed the need for strengthened international cooperation which should be reflected in appropriate financial and technological resources to enable developing countries to implement their national plans.

36. She reaffirmed the commitment of the countries of the Rio Group to work unrelentingly in preparation for the Conference. A ministerial meeting on shelter of Latin America and the Caribbean had been held in Ecuador in 1994 and another was scheduled shortly in Santiago, Chile. Latin America and the Caribbean were fully aware of their obligations and responsibilities to achieve sustainable development and provide a better life for their peoples. The time had come for concerted action. It was essential to focus on the human person and to act with responsibility vis-à-vis present and future generations.

37. Mr. SHINODA (Japan) said that his Government recognized the contribution that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements had made and it had contributed \$800,000 annually to the Centre for the previous four years. Given that other United Nations bodies had significant responsibilities with respect to issues closely related to human settlements, he called for coordination between the Centre and those organs.

38. Due to the explosive increase in population and rapid urbanization in developing countries, the challenge of ensuring viable human settlements was far greater now than it had been in 1988. In anticipation of the third substantive

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session of the Preparatory Committee, he pointed out that the discussions at Habitat II should not simply be a repetition of those which had taken place at the international conferences on related subjects in recent years. Clearly, the declaration issued at the outcome of Habitat II should focus on human settlement questions. The Conference should be considered as a starting-point and Member States and relevant organs of the United Nations system should recognize the importance of following it up with concrete and effective action. It was essential to ensure effective coordination among relevant multilateral financial institutions and other United Nations bodies in follow-up action to Habitat II and other recent United Nations conferences. That was the responsibility of the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

39. Mr. NG'ENO (Kenya) said that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements played a crucial role as a global focal point for human settlements programmes and activities. It also had the capacity to work with other United Nations agencies in assessing damage to human settlements resulting from natural and manmade disasters and from civil strife, and in assisting in the reconstruction, restoration, and reintegration of affected communities.

40. Noting that by the year 2000, about half the world's population would be living in towns and cities, he said that while most African countries were witnessing high rates of urbanization, most of the region remained largely rural. The forthcoming conference must therefore address not only urban but also rural development. There would also be a need for fresh commitments to provide new and additional resources to supplement national efforts for the implementation of the global plan of action once the latter was adopted. The enabling approach, one of the major strategies in the draft global plan of action, urged Governments to facilitate the efforts of other partnerships in the shelter sector to undertake shelter development. The majority of African countries, however, were not in a position to mobilize adequate local resources from a pure market approach. The need remained to provide safety nets and direct public intervention to provide for the needs of the poor.

41. The Habitat secretariat should be given a clear mandate to coordinate human settlement activities and should be entrusted with the coordination, monitoring and follow-up of implementation of the decisions of the Habitat II Conference. The long-term impact and sustainability of commitments by Governments and the international community would depend on the political will to implement them, however. At the national level, Kenya had undertaken a number of activities in preparation for the conference, including the identification, selection and submission of "best practices" to the Habitat II secretariat.

42. His delegation was concerned that, in the course of streamlining the United Nations Centre at Nairobi, a large number of General Service staff members were likely to be retrenched. In its efforts to reduce waste and deal with its financial crisis, the Organization should ensure maximum rational use of existing facilities. His delegation was concerned about the very low rate of use of the conference facilities in Nairobi and requested the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to ensure rational allocation and utilization of those facilities in order to enhance their cost-effectiveness.

43. Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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44. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that the pressure arising from population growth and the trend towards concentration in urban areas had made the task of national Governments more complex and demanded more of their scarce resources. When existing plans failed to keep pace with staggering urban population growth, giving rise to inadequate infrastructure and services, it was not surprising that a large proportion of the 700 million inhabitants of developing countries were dwelling in inadequate shelter and millions were homeless. Recurrent natural disasters also frustrated attempts to provide shelter, and migration to urban areas as a result further complicated urban support services.

45. The guidelines for national action contained in the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 placed particular emphasis on improving institutional and legal frameworks in the shelter sector. In Bangladesh, the Government, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, was testing a housing credit delivery system, as well as methods of improving supply, delivery and durability of building materials appropriate to the rural poor in flood-prone areas. Low-cost housing was another important area of Government activity. Moreover, the Constitution of Bangladesh stated that it was a fundamental responsibility of the State to assure its citizens the basic necessities of life, including shelter.

46. Bangladesh was participating actively in the preparatory process for Habitat II and hoped that it would result in a declaration of global policy and strategy better suited to current challenges.

47. Mr. DADA (Pakistan) said that the negotiations on the substantive documents to be adopted by Habitat II were in trouble because of the unwillingness on the part of certain key countries, during the discussions of the informal drafting group on the global plan of action, to address the international cooperation dimension of human settlements. The refusal to deal with that question was based on three arguments. First, it was suggested that human settlements was not a critical issue meriting strong and concerted international action. That argument was not worth entertaining because the problems of the shelterless, the slum dwellers and the inhabitants of urban areas with deficient civic amenities were so severe and caused such acute human misery, that they needed to be addressed with the utmost urgency. Also, those problems were a cause of social ills and political unrest. That was why the urgent need for focusing on human settlements had been acknowledged by international development institutions; indeed, the World Bank alone was financing 11,000 projects in that area.

48. Secondly, it was stressed that national Governments must resume primary responsibility in that area. While that responsibility was undeniable, it did not preclude the need for international cooperation. That same argument would be equally applicable in the areas of human rights, the environment, and gender equality.

49. Thirdly, it was argued that the international community could not offer much in support of national efforts in the area of human settlements. That was incorrect. In any developing country, the essential prerequisites for achieving the objectives of shelter for all were land and finance at affordable prices and the provision of appropriate technology. To fulfil those prerequisites, international cooperation was needed at the macro and micro levels to help

remove trade barriers, resolve the debt problem and promote the transfer of technology. The sharing of international experiences and expertise in the running of large metropolitan areas, and the exchange of know-how would be useful in a number of areas such as inexpensive building materials, mass transport systems, economic sanitation and water supply schemes.

50. With a view to attaining the objective of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, his Government had, inter alia, carried out studies to mark out the parameters of the housing problem, launched a national action programme aimed at making up the annual housing deficit as well as clearing the backlog, and was setting up a revolving housing fund to initiate inexpensive housing projects.

51. As national efforts alone were insufficient to address the specific question of providing shelter for all, his delegation hoped that Habitat II would result in practical commitments by all actors to address the human settlements issue.

52. Mr. RUDENSKY (Russian Federation) said that the problem of human settlements, which encompassed social, economic, industrial, technological, administrative and environmental aspects, had taken on a global dimension. Moreover, it was in the megalopolis that promising models for environmentally sustainable economic and social development were being tested. It was already clear that the development of human settlements in the twenty-first century would be influenced by current structural changes in the world economy, the establishment of a global information infrastructure and the adoption of non-polluting technological and industrial processes. Those factors should be taken into account when developing recommendations for national strategies for sustainable urban development.

53. The provisions of Commission on Human Settlements resolution 15/11 regarding the use of non-polluting energy sources in transportation and urban construction and the safety of human settlements should be taken into account in the establishment of a working relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy, and on Energy for Development.

54. His delegation attached great importance to the preparatory process for Habitat II but felt that the problems of economies in transition had not been duly reflected in its work, as called for by resolution 15/5. With regard to the draft final document for the Conference, good progress had been achieved on the preamble and on section II, "Goals and principles". The need to achieve an optimal balance between the public and private sector in national housing policy, while ensuring a proper role for local authorities, non-governmental organizations and women, must be reflected, however. Reaching the necessary levels of financing would require good will on the part of all members of the international community, as well. The forthcoming session of the Preparatory Committee would be of great significance, and his delegation would work to ensure its success.

55. Mrs. RADUCHOWSKA-BROCHWICZ (Poland), referring to resolution 15/5 of the Commission on Human Settlements, said that because of the complex problems they

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faced in the area of housing, countries with economies in transition deserved special attention and cooperation at the policy formulation and implementation stages, in particular with respect to capacity-building in the area of shelter and human settlements. In the preparations for Habitat II, more emphasis should be placed on the need to build social infrastructure in urban and rural settlements. In that connection, more attention should be given to the rehabilitation of areas affected by armed conflicts and local wars, particularly the provision of shelter for displaced persons and refugees.

56. Steps should also be taken to promote the exchange of experiences at both national and international levels and the appropriate organizations of the United Nations system as well as other international and non-governmental organizations should develop networking and twinning arrangements, taking advantage of the activities generated by the preparatory process.

57. Mr. ŽEBRAKOVSKÝ (Czech Republic) said that while he considered it very appropriate for the General Assembly to regularly review the main Habitat-related activities including the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 and the preparations for Habitat II, great care should be taken in undertaking such preparations. Setting modest but realistic and well-targeted objectives would serve the Conference's purposes much better than trying to formulate far-reaching goals which might never be implemented even if they were adopted.

58. Although preparations for Habitat II appeared to be moving in the right direction, negotiations concerning such crucial elements as institutional arrangements and commitments were yet to be completed. In that regard, his delegation hoped that the Committee's discussions would contribute to the adoption of a strong, focused, well-balanced and realistic document in Istanbul.

59. Housing and urban problems were among the most difficult problems facing his country in its period of transition. That was why his Government sought international cooperation and assistance in that sector while being increasingly prepared to provide support and share its experience.

60. The regional level was the natural platform for the international coverage of human settlements and housing problems as well as an appropriate point of departure for the global debate. His country, which had been elected to the Commission on Human Settlements, had for the first time made a voluntary contribution to support the activities of Habitat II. Commending the Habitat secretariat and the Preparatory Committee for their efforts to place as much information and as many documents as possible on the Internet, he expressed the hope that in future, both the United Nations Secretariat and delegations would work extensively through the electronic documentation medium.

61. Mr. DE SILVA (Sri Lanka) said that the issue of providing adequate shelter for all human beings appeared to have become a core concern of the international community. In his country, significant strides had been made in providing shelter for the people, primarily for the poor through various programmes. While most efforts in that field had been undertaken through Government agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations had also been encouraged to participate in the shelter strategy and in enhancing the quality of housing and living standards. That strategy had enabled the Government to

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foster the people's participation through self-help schemes. While Sri Lanka valued international cooperation and expertise in that sphere, it had successfully employed indigenous solutions to eradicate homelessness and related problems. The contribution of Habitat in that regard was widely appreciated.

62. In the context of the rapid urbanization of the world's population and the attendant social and economic crises, the theme of Habitat II as a conference on cities was appropriate. His delegation believed that the conclusions to be drawn at that Conference would highlight some problems and solutions likely to help in the preparation of a more holistic approach to the provision of shelter and the improvement of living conditions. In order to facilitate participation at the Conference at the highest possible level, the international community should provide adequate support and assistance to the Conference secretariat.

63. Mr. BRESLER (United States of America) said that the current draft of the Habitat agenda was sometimes at variance with the Rio principles and that it dealt with issues which were beyond the expertise of the Commission on Human Settlements and the Secretariat. In that regard, he supported the call from the representative of Japan for greater focus on the draft agenda and for increased involvement of the Economic and Social Council in the preparations of the Conference.

64. His delegation supported the concept of the government as enabler and believed that the government worked best when it empowered people to make decisions rather than deciding for them. Such fundamental principles needed to be respected consistently throughout the document.

65. While States bore primary responsibility for development, shelter decisions were more often than not made by individuals. Habitat II must therefore be about helping people to make those micro-decisions which must be incorporated into a sustainable whole. Any document which emphasized a government-oriented approach, unrealistic expectations of both central and local authorities and unproductive government interventions would be unacceptable to his Government. Rather, his Government proposed a partnership which would be driven at the local level and supported at the municipal, state and central government levels. The Habitat II agenda must ultimately give adequate weight to the role of essential actors in the shelter sector such as local authorities, neighbourhood associations, non-governmental organizations and women as well as highlight the importance of transparency, civic engagement and public participation in all levels of decision-making on all human settlements issues.

66. The United States had a national housing policy which continually strived for an appropriate balance between the public and private sectors. To be effective, the agenda must stress that the basis for success lay in individual and community-based activities within a framework of government facilitation. The United States opposed the creation of a new right to housing. A distinction needed to be made between needs and basic human rights.

67. He strongly supported equal access, which expanded individual choice and community involvement, whereas equitable access often reduced choice. In that regard, equity was no substitute. While the emphasis of the Habitat II agenda on urban issues reflected the realities that the world would face in the twenty-

first century, it did not adequately reflect the importance of the vital links between rural and urban areas. There must be realistic policies which ensured that secondary sectors were sustainable and that their links with the surrounding food-producing regions were strengthened in appropriate ways.

68. Similarly, the sections dealing with land use also needed to recognize that a balanced approach in that area was crucial to ensuring that all essential needs, including land for natural resources protection and food production were included. Human settlements, more than any other element in the sustainable development equation, depended on the individual and the community, acting within a framework established and protected at the national level.

69. His Government wanted Habitat II to succeed and had made available a supplementary contribution beyond the normal United States annual contribution to the Secretariat for that purpose. In that connection, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was playing a key role in funding the preparation of national plans by developing countries, especially African countries.

70. Ms. ARYSTANBEKOVA (Kazakstan) said that the problems of human settlements were an integral part of international sustainable development. Her delegation commended the broad international cooperation for the preparation of the Habitat II Conference and the significant activities conducted by the regional commissions. For example, the Economic Commission for Europe had held a conference on countries with economies in transition which had provided an opportunity for States to exchange experiences and identify common interests.

71. Cooperation regarding human settlements among members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was going well. Those States were adapting the Housing Indicators Programme to conditions in countries in transition. An overall analysis of regional measures, including development trends in various national policies, would be based on the criteria for identifying "best practices".

72. The recommendations of the Preparatory Committee were being taken into account in Kazakstan. The two-year national plan of action was aimed at establishing a social safety net and a legal framework. Human settlements development was one of the main components of its overall national development policy. Structural adjustment of economies did have a negative impact on housing policy, however, and Kazakstan and other countries in transition needed technical and financial support in order to implement the preparatory process. Over 100 countries had established national preparatory committees, demonstrating their interest in healthy, secure and sustainable human settlements.

73. In conclusion, her delegation supported the view of the Secretary-General that Habitat II should be the culmination of the series of world conferences and summits held in recent years and should transform their recommendations into effective actions for human settlements.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
34th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 15 November 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PETRESKI (The former Yugoslav Republic
of Macedonia)

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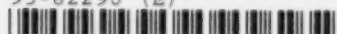
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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued) (A/50/123-S/1995/228, A/50/254-S/1995/201, A/50/255-S/1995/504,
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(b) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued) (A/50/8 and Add.1)

(c) UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)
(continued) (A/50/37, A/50/411, A/50/519)

1. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) said that on the eve of the year 2000 the number of homeless people was continuing to increase considerably, in both developed and developing countries. The statistics indicated that by the year 2000, half the world's population would live in cities. That was an alarming prospect when housing construction was not keeping up with population growth.
2. Benin was participating actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee and felt that the holding of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) within the framework of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty would motivate the participants to formulate new and specific recommendations for the short and medium term. Bearing in mind the main themes of the Conference: "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world", Benin felt that it was not only settlements problems of urban areas which should be stressed. Although urban centres were faced with serious problems arising from growth, which were exacerbated by the economic crisis and the policies of structural adjustment programmes, there must be a balance with the problems of medium and small towns since national administrations tended to accord low priority to them.
3. The cultural dimension of human settlements should also be borne in mind. In Africa, for example, traditional cultural models made it possible to organize the supply of food and establishment of infrastructures and services, and at the same time promoted social cohesion, unlike Western models, which were rational and bureaucratic, but were less efficient.
4. Mr. PRODJOWARSITO (Indonesia), referring to agenda item 95 (b), commended the extensive work carried out by the Preparatory Committees for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II); and expressed full support for the Conference, and confidence that the commitments reached at the Conference would have a major impact on the efforts of the international community to develop sustainable human settlements.
5. The phenomenon of urbanization, entailing an enormous influx of people to megacities, gave rise to a deterioration of human settlements and was a formidable challenge which must be confronted through sustainable people-centred development. Broad-based participation at the grass-roots level was essential; it could be said that the current and future challenge of sustainable development was a challenge of urban settlements.

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6. Indonesia was the fourth most densely populated country in the world and was therefore acutely aware of the magnitude of those problems. It therefore attached great importance to the work of the Preparatory Committee and hoped that, at its third session, it would make significant progress in the elaboration of the Global Plan of Action.
7. In accordance with the agreements adopted by the Preparatory Committee, Indonesia had established a national committee in preparation for the Conference and had started work on its national report. In addition to its participation in the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee, his Government, at the national level, had encouraged the involvement of all sectors of society, from government officials to the private sector, and from non-governmental organizations to academics and professionals, in the preparations for the Conference. For example, in August 1995, in cooperation with Habitat, the private sector had hosted regional conferences on land security and tenure.
8. Lastly, considering that some countries, especially the least developed countries, did not have the necessary resources to attend the next session of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself, Indonesia appealed to the developed countries to provide assistance so as to ensure that the deliberations and outcome would be truly democratic and universal. His delegation also called on the General Assembly to endorse decisions II/1, II/2, II/3 and II/4 adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its second session.
9. Mr. JALLOW (Gambia), referring to the imbalance at the global level between the availability of housing and the size of the population, a problem which extended to the regional and national levels and was compounded by rapid urbanization and inequalities of income, said that that situation highlighted the need for the international community to become involved and for the programmes adopted in 1976 to be improved. Africa's interest in the issues to be addressed by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was reflected in the Johannesburg Declaration on a common African position, which concerned issues relating to an enabling political environment, rural and urban balance, the administration of cities and towns, good governance, community-based participation and partnership, including the role of non-governmental organizations and the private and informal sectors, poverty eradication, disaster mitigation, security, the situation of refugees and displaced persons, the enhancement of institutional and technical capacity, the role of women and youth, the development of local materials and technical assistance and cooperation.
10. Gambia had been fully integrated in the preparatory process for the Conference since 1994, when it had established its national committee and, subsequently, had set up six subcommittees and a technical advisory committee consisting of human settlement experts from both the private and public sectors. Gambia also had a committee on human and housing indicators and was well ahead in the preparation of its national report and plan of action. The national secretariat had also prepared case-studies on best practice to be submitted to the conference to be held in Dubai in November 1995.
11. While Gambia appreciated the invaluable technical assistance it had been receiving from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), it was

still constrained in the full implementation of all aspects of the preparatory process and the national programme, and had therefore appealed to the Habitat secretariat for greater financial assistance.

12. In that respect, the Global Plan of Action to be adopted at Habitat II would give rise to the need for an expansion of the mandate of the Habitat secretariat to serve as the focal point for the coordination of the decisions of the Conference, if necessary under the auspices of an enlarged Commission on Human Settlements, a role that it would no doubt fulfil effectively because of its recognized experience and expertise in the sphere of human settlements.

13. Mr. YAMPOLSKY (Ukraine), referring to the topic of human settlements, said that the prospects were hopeful but alarming. On the one hand, opportunities were being found for the application of new models of international cooperation and major structural changes were taking place, even in countries with economies in transition; on the other hand, many countries were facing serious economic and human-settlement problems, as well as increases in poverty, homelessness, crime and unemployment.

14. The convening of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) was therefore both appropriate and necessary. He welcomed the outcome of the work of the Preparatory Committee and of the Commission on Human Settlements, particularly Commission resolution 15/1 concerning the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, as well as the attention which had been given to countries with economies in transition in other relevant resolutions. However, he supported the Russian Federation's statement that those countries' problems had been insufficiently taken into account in the work of the Preparatory Committee.

15. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine had not maintained close links with the United Nations specialized agencies which were concerned with human settlements. Since gaining its independence, however, it had become much more aware of the importance of the Habitat programme and, in accordance with its policies and with international principles and strategies, it had decided to establish a national committee to make preparations for the Conference. That committee's mandate at the State, regional and local levels was to formulate housing strategies, improve living conditions, reform housing policy and work together with citizens on problem-solving in areas such as urban construction.

16. Ukraine was one of the most urbanized and densely populated States in Europe, with a population of 52.2 million, and a third of its territory was occupied by human settlements. More than 68 per cent of the Ukrainian population lived in towns. A problem which was characteristic of Ukraine, as with other countries with economies in transition, was that of the development of human settlements; industry was highly concentrated in the towns, and transport systems were inadequate and underdeveloped. A number of regions had ecological problems, owing to the insufficient development of facilities for the provision of drinking water, water purification, and the use and storage of industrial waste.

17. Because of the complexity of the ecological and socio-economic problems caused by the Chernobyl disaster, Ukraine attached great importance to the

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reform of the principles governing the use of land and of its resources and the reconstruction and development of human settlements, as well as the reform of the land management system and of the relevant laws.

18. His Government was most interested in other countries' positive experiences with international organizations in connection with the construction of urban housing; there were some cases which could serve as examples for the creation of local management bodies and non-governmental organizations, or private-sector initiatives.

19. Attention should also be given to the area of the development of human settlements. For example, an international system of indicators could be introduced, to serve as a basis for analyses and evaluations which would help to guide housing sector management when work was being done in several countries.

20. Support should be provided to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, and international indicators should be used.

21. Mr. MBATHA (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the sustainable development of human settlements and the principle of adequate shelter for all were priority areas of particular interest to SADC. The Community was actively seeking to ensure broad participation at the City Summit. The Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Human Settlements had met in Johannesburg in October 1995 to consolidate country, subregional and regional strategy towards effective African participation in the Habitat II process.

22. In the context of the important role which cities and urban areas played in economic, political, social and cultural development, the complementarity between urban and rural areas and their respective communities should be taken into account. All sectors of society, including the private and informal sectors, should participate in formulating appropriate programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of all people on a sustainable basis. The needs and contributions of youth should also be taken fully into account in order for constructive actions to be taken for the well-being of young people.

23. The empowerment of women was fundamental for achieving sustainable human development. The inclusion of women in decision-making processes and the removal of barriers inhibiting their full participation in human settlement development would ensure that women would benefit equally from improved income levels, shelter and health care.

24. In order to stimulate the implementation of the Habitat II agenda, financial mechanisms would need to be developed in order to strengthen existing mechanisms and create the necessary support for international, regional and national endeavours. The overall approach to the housing challenge proposed by SADC was to mobilize and harness the combined resources, efforts and initiatives of communities, the private commercial sector and the State in a complementary way. Special emphasis should be placed on the role and responsibility of all actors in maximizing job creation, skills transfer, capacity-building and upward mobility for both skilled and unskilled labour in the housing arena, and

particularly the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in housing construction.

AGENDA ITEM 96: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- (d) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (A/50/536, A/50/716)
- (e) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (A/50/422 and Add.1)

25. Mr. DESAI (Under Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/42 and Add.1), prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 49/122, provided an account of action taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and of institutional arrangements made by United Nations organizations regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action. The report was an update of the report on the same subject-matter (A/49/425 and Add.1) submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

26. The ongoing and planned activities of the United Nations system taken together broadly covered the provisions of the entire Programme of Action. The Commission on Sustainable Development would carry out an initial review of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action at its next session in 1996.

27. In the area of regional coordination, the relevant regional organizations had reported that they had taken initiatives to fulfil their mandates. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had held regional meetings to identify immediate regional priorities and had established coordination mechanisms in collaboration with regional intergovernmental organizations. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had reported that it was consulting with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the country level for possible joint activities. The Inter-agency Commission on Sustainable Development was the mechanism for system-wide coordination.

28. In response to General Assembly resolution 49/100, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had taken the initiative, in collaboration with the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of organizing an inter-sessional panel discussion during the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on trade-related issues affecting small island developing States.

29. The Secretary-General would submit a report to the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on current donor activities to implement the Programme of Action, which would contain a detailed account of financial assistance being made available to those countries from both bilateral and multilateral sources.

30. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/122, a Small Island Developing States Unit had been established within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, which would carry out the functions specified in the Programme of Action.

31. Mr. ZAMMIT-CUTAJAR (Executive Secretary of the interim secretariat, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) presented two reports under item 96 (d): the final report of the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC/FCCC) (A/50/536) and the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/716).

32. The first Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Berlin, had been the major event of the year for the Convention. It had given shape to the institutions and mechanisms of the Convention and mandated new efforts to suggest responses to climate change, including the Berlin Mandate. The content of the outcome of the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention was described in chapter III of the report of the Secretary-General.

33. The main thrust of the report of the Secretary-General concerned the institutional linkage that the Conference wished to establish between the secretariat for the Convention and the United Nations. There were two basic reasons for that linkage: first, the Convention's membership was approaching that of the Assembly itself, and second, climate change was not only a global environmental concern but also a key dimension of sustainable development, both nationally and internationally. It was difficult to imagine the United Nations pursuing its aims for sustainable development, through Agenda 21, without retaining a link with the Convention. For its part, the Conference's interest in such a link might be understood as a desire for institutional economy (avoiding the creation of a new institution) and a wish to maintain a secure anchorage in the regulations, rules, practices and services of the United Nations.

34. It was important to guarantee the financial health of the Convention process, and to that end the individual parties must make some or all of their contributions to the 1996 budget before the due date of 1 January. However, since those contributions did not provide for the costs of conference services, the other necessary measure was that the current General Assembly should respond favourably to the request to finance those services, a request made in the name of more than 140 Member States whose collective share of the United Nations budget was some 95 per cent.

35. In the following two years the Convention would have many difficulties to overcome, not only at the scientific level but also in relation to relocating its secretariat to Bonn, Germany, beginning the following July. The Convention would need a solid institutional and financial base to complete its work successfully.

36. Mrs. REBONG (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that protection of the global climate had ceased being a topic discussed only by experts and scientists to become a concern of everybody, since what was at stake was the survival of humankind. It was therefore satisfying to note that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had been ratified

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by 144 States and one regional economic integration organization. Another noteworthy event was the holding in Berlin of the first session of the Conference of the Parties. The Group of 77 and China hoped that the meeting would lead to a strengthening of the Convention, and remained fully committed to its objectives.

37. The Group of 77 and China urged the developed countries to promote the implementation of the Convention by providing new, additional resources and transferring environmentally sound technologies under preferential conditions.

38. At their nineteenth ministerial meeting, held in September, the Group of 77 and China had called on the international community to give special priority to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Implementation of that Programme of Action also required adequate resources, as well as the transfer of technology, fair and non-discriminatory trade agreements, and human resource development.

39. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had confirmed that the phenomenon of global warming was continuing, a fact that underlined the urgent need to meet the challenge of the negative effects of that phenomenon, especially in the developing countries. Steps should be taken to that end as soon as possible, based on the principle of shared but different responsibilities.

40. Mr. ACEBO (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed its satisfaction with the results of the first Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and reaffirmed its commitment to stabilize carbon dioxide emissions within the Union by the year 2000, and asked the other parties included in annex I to do the same. The decision contained in the Berlin Mandate to begin to adopt measures for the period beginning in the year 2000 was an important step. The establishment of the Convention's permanent secretariat in Bonn would contribute to strengthening the Convention.

41. The forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development would examine progress made in applying the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States, adopted in Barbados in 1994. The European Union remained fully committed to assisting that Programme of Action and was providing financial and technical assistance, along with the agencies and organs of the United Nations system.

42. Mr. SHIBATA (Vice-Chairman of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), speaking on behalf of Dr. Merkel, Chairman of the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, said that the first session of the Conference of the Parties had been a key event in the follow-up process to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, and had set in motion the implementation of the Convention in a spirit of cooperation and mutual trust.

43. After extremely difficult negotiations, the parties had agreed upon the Berlin Mandate for negotiating further commitments on limiting and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, since the consensus opinion was that current

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commitments by the industrialized countries were not adequate. No new commitments would be required from the developing countries; however, all the parties reaffirmed their existing commitments. In addition, a special group had been set up to draft a protocol or some other legal instrument. Such a document should contain ambitious targets for global climate protection.

44. Another decision of great importance for the implementation of the Convention was the decision on national communications from annex I Parties. All such communications would be studied in depth as soon as possible by working groups of experts nominated by both annex I and non-annex I Parties. Information contained in the national communications could be useful in the implementation of the Berlin Mandate and would increase the opportunities for cooperation within the framework of the Convention. The Conference had requested its subsidiary bodies to formulate guidelines for the preparation of such communications and to make proposals for the process of considering them.

45. Also worthy of note was the agreement reached by the Conference concerning joint implementation of activities by annex I Parties during a pilot phase. The pilot phase could contribute to establishing new forms of cooperation and enhancing the diffusion and transfer of technology. The first step would be the establishment of a framework for Parties to report on their activities. Experience gained in that way and progress on methodological issues should make it possible to design a regime for activities to be implemented jointly beyond the pilot phase, by the end of the present decade at the latest. For that process to be productive, in addition to political will, stable institutional arrangements were necessary. The Conference had already adopted a number of decisions on institutional, administrative and financial arrangements for the Conference of the Parties itself and for the Convention secretariat.

46. Some of those decisions required specific action by the General Assembly. The first such decision concerned the establishment of institutional links between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations. That linkage, which did not involve integration in the work programme or administrative structure of any particular department, would be reviewed by the Conference, in consultation with the Secretary-General. The interim secretariat of the Convention had thus far supported the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, with the help of the General Assembly. To carry on working within the framework of the rules and regulations of the United Nations would be very advantageous for the Convention secretariat. Such an institutional linkage would mean not only that the Convention secretariat could count on adequate administrative support services, but also that its governing body would be accountable to the Secretary-General. The Conference of the Parties would make every effort to facilitate the work of the secretariat, particularly in the area of financial and personnel operations. All that was needed therefore was a decision by the General Assembly endorsing the Secretary-General's initiative.

47. Another question requiring a decision from the General Assembly concerned the provision of conference services. In the past, the United Nations had provided conference services and facilities, and it was expected to carry on doing so until the end of 1995. However, the work related to the Convention was of a long-term nature. The Conference of the Parties was therefore asking the

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General Assembly to decide, bearing in mind the proposed institutional linkage and the large number of States which were already Parties to the Convention, to finance from the regular budget of the United Nations the conference services for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies.

48. An item specifically related to climate had first been placed on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1988. By 1990, Governments were ready to start negotiations on a framework convention, which was ratified two years later in Rio de Janeiro by 144 States and one regional economic integration organization. Once the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee completed its mandate, the General Assembly, rather than deciding to dissolve that body, assigned to it the task of preparing for the first session of the Conference of the Parties, thereby ensuring that the intergovernmental work on the Convention remained a priority for Governments. As a result of that decision the Framework Convention had entered into force in March 1994. Had the General Assembly not acted as catalyst and had it not provided the institutional support, the Framework Convention process would not have been so rapid and satisfactory.

49. Climate protection was one of the greatest challenges at the present time. Unless measures were taken quickly, the consequences would be irreversible. The threat to the existence of small island States posed by a rise in sea levels was a perfect example. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility on which the Convention was based should be accepted by all parties. The continued support of the General Assembly was also necessary if the commitment of the international community was to be maintained.

50. Mrs. des ILES (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that, in approving the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action, the international community had recognized the unique characteristics and vulnerability of the small island States, for whom sustainability was synonymous with survival. It was very important for the small island States that the outcome of the 1994 Barbados Conference should be adequately reflected in the sustainable development programmes and activities of the United Nations. The members of the Alliance were satisfied with the establishment of the Small Island Developing States Unit within the Sustainable Development Division.

51. In the light of the financial crisis facing the United Nations, the 31 Member States who were members of the Alliance of Small Island States had no choice but to accept a minimal allocation of resources to a programme which was extremely important to them. Their position was that the current allocation of resources from the regular budget of the United Nations to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was the absolute minimum acceptable to members of the Alliance.

52. The Barbados Programme of Action was of necessity a wide-ranging and multi-faceted programme, implementation of which would require the continued attention and efforts of the whole United Nations system. It went without saying that if it was to succeed, or even simply to survive, a central coordinating and monitoring unit was needed. The Small Island Developing States Unit had been set up to meet that need; it served as a point of liaison for Governments and

all parts of the United Nations system concerned with the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The Alliance welcomed the preparation by the Unit of a publication on some sources of funding for environmental projects accessible to the Member States who formed the Alliance. The Alliance attached great importance to the work of the Unit on the establishment, in collaboration with UNCTAD, of a high-level panel which would consider in 1996 the problems faced by the small island developing States in the area of external trade.

53. The members of the Alliance attached particular importance to the regional measures taken by various regional economic commissions intended to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. Those commissions should be provided with the resources which would enable them to assist in taking the measures needed at the regional and subregional levels to implement the Barbados Programme of Action.

54. The members of the Alliance expressed their particular interest in the role of UNDP in the implementation of the Programme of Action and would continue to rely on UNDP resources in the critical area of capacity-building, in particular through the Capacity 21 Fund. The Alliance was grateful for the fact that UNDP had nearly completed a directory of institutions and scholars with expertise on small island States and for its continued implementation of the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS/TAP) through assessment and project formulation exercises to be carried out in the various subregions with a view to mobilizing support and funding for the implementation of priority projects. The Alliance also pledged to continue working with UNDP on the Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDS/NET).

55. Referring to the report of the Secretary-General on action taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/50/422), he noted that the concluding observations (chapter III) expressed an optimism with regard to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action which was not shared by members of the Alliance, who felt that much remained to be done and that it would have been preferable to provide a more incisive analysis of what had been achieved thus far and of the limitations of those achievements. It was necessary to examine all the means used thus far in order to formulate a clearer implementation strategy for the future; that might be achieved during the preparations for the initial review of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

56. The natural disasters which had recently occurred in the Caribbean and the Pacific were a reminder of the need for decisive action to reduce global warming through the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken under the provisions of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the strengthening of those commitments in the future. The Alliance, which had had its genesis in the context of the negotiations for the Convention on Climate Change, was undaunted in its determination to promote a more effective and stronger Convention.

57. In September 1994, the Alliance had submitted a draft protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which it had hoped would be adopted at the First Conference of the Parties, held in Berlin in early 1995. The draft protocol asked developed countries to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide by the year 2005 to a level at least 20 per cent below that attained in 1990 and

to establish timetables for controlling emissions of other greenhouse gases, but the decision of the Berlin Conference had fallen short of the expectations of the Alliance countries. The Alliance was nevertheless pleased that the Berlin Conference had concluded that the commitments undertaken in the Convention were inadequate to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the global climate system. The Alliance would continue working to ensure that a legal instrument was adopted to respond adequately to the long-term problems of climate change.

58. Success in protecting the global climate required the collective action of all members of the international community but, given the contribution of the industrialized countries to global emissions and their financial and technological capabilities, they must lead the way in meeting the problems of climate change; that was a fundamental principle which had been expressly acknowledged by the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The provisions and commitments contained in the present Framework Convention must be implemented in their totality, and developing countries must be provided with the support and technology which they needed in order to contribute to bringing the climate system to an acceptable equilibrium.

59. The Alliance would continue to participate in the discussions and negotiations on climate change, acting not only in its own interest but also in the wider global interest; in that spirit, it sought the cooperation and support of the international community for the protection of the global climate for present and future generations.

60. Ms. WILLIAMS-STEWART (Samoa) said that in recent times the world community had witnessed the climate changes that were occurring everywhere, accompanied by great loss of human lives and damage to property. The effects of those phenomena on economies, and on the prospects for sustainable development of small island States, were devastating.

61. At the annual meeting of the South Pacific Forum, which had been held two months previously in Papua New Guinea, political leaders had expressed their concern with regard to climate change in the region. For those countries, the phenomenon of climate change was a constant worry; for that reason, during the discussions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, the Alliance countries had put forward the idea of a protocol to the Framework Convention as a realistic way to strengthen the commitments made under the Convention. The idea of setting up a protocol had been examined in Berlin at the first Conference of the Parties; she welcomed the real achievements of that conference, particularly the recognition by the parties of the inadequacy of the commitments made under paragraphs 2 (a) and (b) of article 4 of the Convention and the decision to begin a process of action beyond the year 2000. The Berlin Mandate was an acknowledgement of the seriousness and sense of responsibility with which the parties regarded the question of greenhouse gas emissions and their impact on climate change. In that regard, she noted that her delegation had taken part in two sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Berlin Mandate. Despite the progress achieved by the Working Group, certain matters of fundamental importance must be kept in mind: first, the element of urgency since, under the Berlin Mandate, the Working Group had barely two years to complete a series of tasks which were extensive and complex in their technical

aspects and policy implications; second, the fact that there were clear indications which confirmed that human beings could induce climate change and which had led the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to assess the need for urgent action, pointing out the economic feasibility of such action. In that respect, her delegation wished once again to register the concern of her country, and other countries of the Alliance, with regard to the work of analysis and assessment which was being called for by other parties since such work might duplicate that of the Intergovernmental Panel and other relevant bodies and might unnecessarily delay the timely conclusion of the Berlin Mandate process.

62. Samoa set a high priority on the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and welcomed the work being done in that field by international, regional and non-governmental organizations. Clearly, the Programme of Action could not be considered in isolation from the international efforts being made in other fields related to sustainable development such as programmes on population issues, women, social development and the protection of the environment. Samoa appreciated the respective roles of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and hoped that the establishment of the Small Island Developing States Unit as part of the Division for Sustainable Development would lead to greater and more effective capacity to assist those States on development issues.

63. SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP had great potential for networking and for the sharing of much needed information and technical expertise among small island developing States, but there was a need to move forward to real action at the national and regional levels.

64. In 1994, the leaders of the South Pacific Forum had established a consultative mechanism to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Within that framework, a database of activities to implement the Programme of Action had been set up and would help to coordinate follow-up activities to that programme.

65. Samoa recognized that the primary responsibility for implementing the Programme of Action lay with the small island States themselves, and it had endeavoured to implement some of the measures adopted at the 1992 Rio Conference and to translate the recommendations of Agenda 21 into a national programme of action. To that end, it had initiated a process of policy review in all sectors to ensure consistency with the objective of sustainable development. In that regard, she noted that policies had been set up to govern the allocation, use and management of natural resources, in particular forests, fresh water, fisheries and agriculture. New policies and strategies governing population, the protection of biodiversity and waste management were currently being formulated, and a broadly consultative approach to policy formulation and programme implementation involving non-governmental organizations and the community at large was being encouraged. Samoa's legislation was also being reviewed in order to strengthen the functions of the principal governmental agencies concerned with the environment, including the mandatory application of environmental impact assessments.

66. The Barbados Programme of Action encouraged the use of environmental impact assessments in the protection of the marine and coral reef environment of small island States. Accordingly, Samoa called upon France to conduct such assessments immediately, before continuing with its nuclear testing programme in Mururoa, which was hazardous to the health, environment and sustainable development of the peoples of the Pacific. There was a significant body of scientific opinion that contradicted the complacency of France's assurances that there was no danger from its nuclear tests, which were being carried out with disregard for the health and environment of the peoples of the South Pacific region.

67. Effective implementation, monitoring and review of the Programme of Action were essential to the sustainable development process. While strides had been made towards economic growth and sustainable development, the implementation of the Programme was very dependent upon international cooperation, which Samoa hoped would continue and expand.

68. Mr. PAWAR (India) said that the Framework Convention on Climate Change did not deal solely with the control of greenhouse gases; the eradication of poverty, sustained economic growth in the developing countries, the avoidance of risk to food production and to the livelihood and habitat of the poor were also integral to the Convention, where the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was very clear. In annex I, the Parties had undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and had agreed to provide developing countries with new resources and make environmentally sound technology available to them on preferential and concessional terms. It was extremely important to abide by those Rio de Janeiro commitments.

69. The adverse effects of climate change were increasingly manifest. Most countries recognized that the commitments under the Convention were inadequate, yet no serious efforts were being made to meet the targets, and after the agreement reached in Berlin to work for quantified objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gases, it appeared that the opportunity was being taken even to challenge the existing commitments.

70. Equitable burden-sharing in emission reduction had no meaning without a full accounting of the scope of the emissions and without an equitable and equal sharing of environmental space. According to conservative estimates, the privileges enjoyed by the developed countries through their excessive emissions amounted to \$100 billion annually. That was the amount of environmental rent that they ought to pay to the developing countries for eating into their environmental space. Instead, the developed countries were reluctant to transfer new and additional resources; official development assistance was declining because of supposed donor fatigue and lack of domestic support. As for the developing countries, their lack of development had prevented them from using and benefiting from the earth's global commons. There could be no comparison between the survival emissions of the developing countries and the luxury emissions of the developed countries. Delays in emission reduction by the industrialized nations were increasingly reducing the opportunities and options available to the developing countries and increasing the costs of adapting to the changing global climate.

71. India had participated actively in the process leading to the elaboration of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. That Programme of Action adopted in Barbados had recognized that small island developing States and islands supporting small communities would require special programmes and approaches appropriate to their special situations, problems and needs. In a certain sense, they embodied a unique and peculiar vulnerability to a combination of ecological fragility, natural disasters and the vagaries of the international economic situation. The small size of their populations, resource space and markets, their relative geographic isolation and the wide differences in ecological and geographical characteristics hindered their ability to achieve self-sustaining development.

72. The development of those islands required, inter alia, programmes for the maintenance, regeneration and restoration of the ecosystem in order to exploit productive potential and also provide employment to local communities. India had found decentralization and the involvement of local communities to be an effective way of managing that process, and had created bodies and institutional structures for the purpose, which meant that human resource development and administrative capacity-building were also important.

73. There should be an interactive process between the scientific community and the end user to encourage the development of relevant strategies and technology. There was also a need for technology that could be applied on a small scale in, for instance, the development and utilization of renewable sources, fresh water, building materials and other resources. Thus, technical and economic cooperation could be an important mechanism for the transfer of technology and exchange of experience.

74. In India's view, small island developing States required not just periodic infusions of assistance or technology; the real challenge was to ensure their integration into the world economic system while ensuring self-sustaining development.

75. Mr. DELANEY (Papua New Guinea) said that his Government had been disappointed with the results of the first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, where rhetoric and procedural and legal manoeuvring had been allowed to sidetrack the real issues such as global warming, sealevel rise and the immense potential for atmospheric change, which threatened the existence of island States and their people. Papua New Guinea also regretted that the Alliance of Small Island States had not been invited to take part in the final negotiations.

76. The "Berlin Mandate" had grown out of the conclusion that article 4, subparagraphs 2 (a) and (b) of the Convention were inadequate, and that a process of strengthening should be undertaken with a view to the period beyond the year 2000. Yet what needed strengthening was the Mandate decision itself, and concrete reduction targets should be set for greenhouse gas emissions in the next century, bearing in mind that it was most important to put into effect the proposed protocol on the matter as soon as possible. It should be noted that despite the procedural obstacles that had plagued the process, to the advantage of a small number of countries, some countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development were working towards fulfilling their obligations.

77. On the issue of the Convention secretariat, Papua New Guinea urged all needed support for the establishment of a permanent secretariat in Berlin, so that the States Parties and the Convention process could be assured of the needed financial and technical support.

78. Through the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Papua New Guinea was building up its national capacity with a view to the preparation of a national report for the next Conference of the Parties, to be held in 1997.

79. Preparations for the review and appraisal of the Barbados Programme of Action were of particular interest in connection with the follow-up to the Rio Conference, and it was encouraging that there had been a wide response by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action, particularly the initiatives taken by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. Papua New Guinea favoured strengthening the Department's Small Island Developing States Unit, for it would play a prominent role in implementing the Programme of Action. Also important for its implementation was SIDS/NET, coordinated by UNDP.

80. A more practical approach should be taken in connection with SIDS/TAP. Although thus far it had stressed technical cooperation between Papua New Guinea and its neighbours in the Pacific and in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), local participation in different sectors central to the overall strategy for the implementation of Agenda 21 was being promoted. UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should play an even greater role as catalysts in the exchange of experts among small island developing States and in the long-term establishment of a group of experts from those States within the United Nations system, just as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should expand its valuable work of monitoring and evaluating environmental problems.

81. His Government supported the role of the regional commissions and non-governmental associations in planning and implementing human resource development programmes, and urged that the resources pledged the previous year for the Port Vila Centre should be provided to strengthen its capacity for assistance.

82. Lastly, his delegation reaffirmed its commitment to international cooperation in monitoring, assessing and anticipating of environmental threats and in assisting in case of environmental emergencies, and to the strengthening of the international capacity to monitor global environmental problems.

83. Ms. DORDELLY (Venezuela) said that her delegation supported the statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Regarding the item Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind, she reiterated the commitments made by Venezuela, under the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

84. Venezuela had formulated policies and established programmes to conserve, preserve and maintain the ecosystem, through its Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources. On many occasions it had emphasized the need, in

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international negotiations, to strike a satisfactory balance between development and conservation. It understood clearly and fully accepted the concept of sustainable development. However, implementing the concept called for resources, transfer of technology and favourable conditions. That was one of the areas where the spirit of cooperation in the new international order could be put to the test.

85. The loss of biological diversity was one of the most compelling issues on the global environmental agenda. There was no doubt but that the large-scale extinction of species would affect many of Venezuela's ecosystems, and also Latin America, which was one of the world's major natural reserves; that sorry legacy of the twentieth century must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Convention on Biological Diversity was undoubtedly the appropriate framework within which to promote international cooperation in that sphere.

86. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China) said that the sustainable development of small island developing States constituted an inalienable part of the sustainable development of the developing countries and of the world as a whole. Because of the historical, geographical, economic and biological characteristics of those States, achieving sustainable development would require not only the efforts of those States but also international support. The developed countries in particular had a duty to do their share.

87. Climate change and its adverse effects were a common concern of humanity. Although the industrial revolution had led to the creation of material wealth, it had also resulted in a steady increase in the emissions of greenhouse gases, posing a direct threat to the global ecosystem and the survival of mankind. The entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994 and the first session of the Conference of the Parties held in Berlin in March 1995 marked a new phase in the search for solutions to that problem.

88. China believed that the Convention was an important achievement of the Rio Conference, which had laid the foundation for global cooperation in that area. Nevertheless, unless the Parties to the Convention fulfilled their commitments strictly, the goal of the Convention, laudable though it was, would remain a mirage.

89. China welcomed the adoption of the Berlin Mandate for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the decision that the Global Environment Facility should serve as an interim financial mechanism for the Convention. It also supported the negotiations, begun in fulfilment of the Berlin Mandate, to draw up a new legal instrument to enhance the implementation of the commitments on the part of the developed countries to limit and control the emission of greenhouse gases. Her delegation was of the view that the negotiating process should proceed in accordance with the principles established by the Convention and by the Berlin Mandate, and that the result of the negotiations should in no way constitute any increase in the obligations of the developing countries.

90. Although the per capita emission of carbon dioxide in China was less than half the world average, her Government was prepared to join the world community in addressing climate change on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities. To that end, it had formulated "China's Agenda 21" and

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adopted all kinds of measures, in the light of China's energy situation as well as the level of its economic development. Those measures sought to promote economic growth, disseminate energy-saving technology, increase energy efficiency and slow the growth in carbon dioxide emissions by enacting national laws in order to make its contribution towards addressing global climate change.

91. Mr. AL-SABBAGH (Kuwait) said that protection of the environment was one of the major concerns of the Kuwaiti Government. It had recently established the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment in order to enhance regional cooperation in that area.

92. The environmental damage resulting from Iraqi aggression against Kuwait had yet to be fully evaluated, but it could be said that the burning of 700 oil wells and spillage of millions of tons of crude oil on land and in the waters of the Arabian Gulf had caused incalculable damage. It would be many decades before land flooded with oil could be used for agriculture, and marine plants and animals would not recover easily from the contamination they had suffered. The effects of the clouds of smoke and the acid rain which had fallen as a result of the oil-well fires had also not been evaluated. Furthermore the mines laid by the Iraqi forces had produced hundreds of casualties among the elderly, the young and children.

93. In addition, according to a recent investigation by the International Maritime Organization, the wrecks of large tankers in the northern Arabian Gulf posed a direct threat to the safety of international navigation and ecological balance.

94. Kuwait requested the International Maritime Organization to supervise the operation to salvage and remove the Iraqi tanker Amoria and the vessels Remela and Aynzalla, which had sunk in international waters, in cooperation with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment.

95. Mr. RONNEBERG (Marshall Islands) said that his Government supported the comprehensive and ambitious programme adopted at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which fit in well with its own efforts. The Marshall Islands had adopted a National Environment Management Strategy and had set up an Interministerial Commission for implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action on the national level; it was also cooperating with some neighbouring countries in implementing the Programme.

96. For many smaller countries, regional cooperation in financing projects was the most logical and viable solution. The Pacific island countries had made regional cooperation their modus operandi on environmental issues. They were executing projects dealing, inter alia, with the preservation of biodiversity, protection of coastal zones and climate change.

97. Many activities were being undertaken to implement the principles agreed at Rio and reiterated in subsequent conferences, but his delegation was not convinced that all members of the international community were equally committed to those principles. The Marshall Islands fully supported the recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The storms which had devastated the Marshall Islands had contaminated many of the freshwater

supplies; some members of the Alliance of Small Island States were threatened with disappearance because of sea-level rise. It was clear, therefore, that the need to adopt measures under the Framework Convention had taken on new urgency. Short-term economic interests were impeding that work, however. If the further sale of oil was given a higher value than the lives of island peoples around the world, then the ideals of the United Nations would be violated. The Berlin Mandate was not ideal, but it was the minimum acceptable response. Developed countries which had not yet met their obligations under the Convention on Climate Change must begin to do so. The very survival of a number of islands was at stake.

98. The international community had endorsed the concept of environmental impact assessments and the developed countries had given much advice on how to minimize damage to the environment. The Ministry of the Environment of France had issued a report which dealt at great length with the fragility of coral reefs and the need to ensure that development activities did not endanger them, and proposed that an environmental impact assessment should be conducted in all cases. Such an environmental impact assessment was precisely what the leaders of the South Pacific Forum had asked France to carry out before proceeding with its nuclear tests, but their pleas had gone unheeded. They had been promised an environmental impact assessment after the tests were completed, but that was absurd, because the damage would then be irreparable. There was enough nuclear material stored in Mururoa to leave the Pacific without life. His Government was not convinced of the safety of the tests, and would continue to demand that an environmental impact assessment be carried out before any more tests were conducted. The studies conducted by the Government of France were not comprehensive; they were not sufficiently independent, nor did they look at cumulative effects.

99. His delegation had raised the issue in the First Committee, where it and other delegations had been accused of introducing emotional elements into the debate. The Marshall Islands did not agree, and would like the delegations present to study the matter in depth. Accordingly, he would distribute a copy of the statement he had made in the First Committee together with a map of the nuclear testing zone provided by the French Ministry of Defence, on which the Pacific Island countries were not even shown.

100. The Marshall Islands hoped that the Committee would reaffirm the need for environmental impact assessments and would send a clear message to the effect that sustainable development was threatened by the testing of nuclear weapons.

101. Mr. LEUNG (Fiji) endorsed the statement of the representative of Samoa. France should stop the nuclear tests, which were definitely harmful to the environment. He welcomed the commencement of the Berlin Mandate. Given the importance of negotiations to strengthen the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the secretariat of the Convention should support the widest possible participation in those negotiations, particularly for the special categories of countries mentioned in article 4 (8) of the Convention.

102. His delegation was concerned that, at the end of the first session of the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, the question of the composition of the bureau of the Conference of the Parties had not been fully resolved. It would

be justified and proper to include a small island developing State in the bureau. Small island developing countries of the Pacific were the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. Despite that fact, some of the delegations had tried to undermine the right of self-preservation of such States by working to frustrate closure of the question of the rules of procedure. Fiji would take all necessary steps to preserve that right and hoped that that issue as well as other procedural matters would be resolved once and for all so that the Ad Hoc Group could focus on the drafting of a protocol.

103. Much still remained to be done. First, annex I parties needed to fulfil their commitments under the Convention. Second, those commitments must be strengthened. Third, no new commitments should be imposed on developing countries. Fourth, the Ad Hoc Group should have regard in its negotiations to the provisions of article 4 (7) of the Convention, namely that economic and social development as well as poverty eradication would remain priorities for developing countries. Fifth, Fiji continued to subscribe to the view that the targets set at the Toronto World Conference on Climate Change and the Alliance of Small Island States Protocol must be the basis for negotiations within the Ad Hoc Group.

104. His delegation accepted the views in the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and urged the industrialized countries which were responsible for the largest share of harmful emissions to assume leadership of the negotiations for the remaining sessions of the Ad Hoc Group.

105. With respect to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, he regretted that a lack of political will had prevented most developed countries from allocating adequate financial resources to enable developing countries to tackle the problems of environmental degradation. Developing countries recognized that they bore the main responsibility for implementing Agenda 21, but their efforts required external assistance. If the target for official development assistance was not met, there would be serious renegeing of commitments made at Rio. The more affluent industrialized countries must recognize their responsibility and take urgent steps to assist small island developing States to implement the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

106. He commended the decision of the Inter-agency Commission on Sustainable Development to request task managers to include a separate section on small island developing States in their respective reports and welcomed the designation of new task managers for areas of the Programme of Action not covered by Agenda 21.

107. He had noted with interest the section of the report of the Secretary-General relating to the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (A/50/422), in particular the paragraphs relating to the Small Island Developing States Unit. Not only should the Department be responsible for monitoring and coordination; it must also assume a greater catalytic role within the United Nations system with a view to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. He looked forward to the publication on select sources of funding for

small island developing States as well as the compilation of an information database for those States.

108. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was carrying out valuable work for small island developing States. He was pleased to note that important issues such as climate change and sea level rise, natural disasters and the protection of coastal and marine resources were featured in the UNEP work programme. He also welcomed the fact that UNEP had decided to hold training workshops on environmentally sound forms of tourism development. Tourism was a significant component of the Fiji economy. His Government would therefore be happy to consider hosting a regional workshop in conjunction with UNEP on that subject.

109. Mr. DELACROIX (France), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said it had been proved that French policy in the South Pacific was not harmful to the environment and that his country had constantly been concerned to verify that fact. Independent experts had periodically conducted scientific research and had arrived at the conclusion that the underground nuclear tests did not have any effect from the radiation or geological viewpoint; nor did they affect the fauna or flora. That diagnosis had been confirmed in the report submitted by a group of Australian scientists to the meeting of South Pacific Forum Environment Ministers recently held in Brisbane. It was the responsibility of the representatives of South Pacific Forum countries to refute the conclusions of their own experts.

110. France had shown a constant concern for transparency and openness. However, it wished the dialogue on such issues to be carried out in the appropriate forum. The First Committee was currently considering all aspects of that question. He hoped that those who were questioning his country would have the prudence to restrict such debates to the First Committee and thus avoid politicizing the work of the Second Committee whose effectiveness would be undermined.

111. Mrs. WILLIAMS-STEWART (Samoa), replying to the representative of France, said that the concerns expressed with respect to the French nuclear tests were very relevant to the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Those concerns related to the health of women and children and the protection of the environment, the only resource that countries of the region had.

112. France maintained that the scientific evidence submitted on the safety of its nuclear testing programme was conclusive, but the evidence had been fragmentary and did not cover all aspects. France had been reluctant to provide the countries of the Pacific with all the evidence requested and had not submitted definitive proof attesting to the validity of its statements on the safety of its nuclear tests.

113. If the nuclear tests did not pose any danger to health, as France claimed, she wondered why they were not carried out in mainland France. If there was such conclusive scientific evidence that the French nuclear tests were not harmful to the people and environment of the South Pacific, then it should be made available to the countries of the region.

114. She once again urged France to carry out an environmental impact study in order to prove what it was asserting.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FIFTIETH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
35th meeting
held on
Thursday, 16 November 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MURPHY (Ireland)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

- (d) PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/50/536, A/50/716)
- (e) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (continued) (A/50/422 and Add.1)

1. Mr. Ha-Yong MOON (Republic of Korea) welcomed the progress achieved at the first session of the Conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and hoped that, in view of the critical importance of the matter, the negotiations on the Berlin Mandate would be completed at the earliest stage possible in 1997. It was equally crucial for the parties to the Convention to set the goals and timetable for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions beyond the year 2000 and to give due consideration to the principle of common but different responsibilities of States in that regard. Meanwhile, the parties to the Convention, particularly those countries identified in annex I, should fulfil their obligations under the Convention, in particular article 4, subparagraphs 2 (a) and (b).

2. Stressing the importance of technology and its transfer in combating and preventing environmental degradation and further global warming, he welcomed the climate technology initiative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and expressed the hope that tangible and effective measures would be taken for its implementation. The international community, particularly developed countries and international organizations, must fulfil the commitments with respect to the transfer of environmentally sound technology undertaken under Agenda 21 and assist the developing countries in building their national capacities in the areas of science and technology.

3. With respect to the implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the United Nations should increase the scope of its activities concerning some components of the Programme of Action such as biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity-building. Given the uniqueness and fragility of the natural, social and economic conditions of small island States, the international community must urgently provide them with new and additional resources for their sustainable development. It should also conduct a comprehensive review of actions taken at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in order to identify the problems and obstacles to the implementation of the Programme of Action. In that regard, the Secretary-General should prepare a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action at all levels.

4. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that attention should be focused on implementing the agreed programmes to limit environmental pollution and climate change; that would require the provision of financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology. A firm linkage between climate change and

economic development was also necessary in view of the adverse effects of climate change suffered by the developing countries. He looked forward to the next Conference of the Parties, which would address the matter of devising practical solutions to the problems produced by climate change. He also hoped that it would examine the difficulties which continued to obstruct achievement of the objectives of the Framework Convention, as well as implementation of the programmes needed to limit the adverse effects of climate change. It should also take into consideration new developments. One approach might be to supplement the Convention with an additional protocol, albeit on the understanding that the developing countries should not be encumbered by any further commitments as a result.

5. Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions should focus on the urban transport, communications and energy sectors, and particular attention should be devoted to environmental policies and programmes in the developing countries with a view to improving and developing sustainable transport and communications systems, bearing in mind the respective social, economic and environmental requirements of those countries. To that end, the appropriate technology should be transferred from the developed countries.

6. Egypt had fulfilled its undertakings to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which, underresourced as it was, would be unable to achieve its assigned objectives unless it received more support. He none the less urged it to devote attention to projects being implemented by Egypt to deal with the effects of climate change, particularly in connection with its dwindling water resources and threatened agricultural land in the northern Delta and Sinai. In that context, however, his Government required greater support from international partners, notably in the implementation of projects relating to enabling activities in those two regions. Meanwhile, it had introduced specific measures for acquiring additional funds and had also adopted ambitious programmes to improve energy use and reduce waste.

7. The next Conference of the Parties should therefore review the fulfilment of commitments under the Convention, as well as the remaining obstacles to be overcome. It should also adopt implementation programmes within the framework of an effective international partnership, with each partner shouldering its commitments to tackle the adverse effects of climate change created and aggravated by the industrial revolution and non-sustainable production and consumption patterns. In conclusion, since natural resources were the prime income source in developing countries, he hoped that concerted efforts would be channelled into addressing the needs of those countries, in particular the small island developing States.

8. Mr. KARIYAKASAN (Sri Lanka) said that action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would have to be based not only on scientific and economic criteria but also on political and social sensitivities and practical necessities. Since the extent to which most developing countries implemented their commitments under the Convention depended on assistance received in the transfer of technologies, capacity-building and implementation of sustainable development programmes, it was imperative to enhance and replenish the resources available through the Global Environment Facility on a regular basis. In that regard, the

option of establishing a separate financial mechanism for the Convention should not be dismissed prematurely.

9. His delegation believed that the international community should take strong and concerted action against terrorist groups which focused on economic targets with the potential to create environmental hazards, since such environmental damage could have global repercussions.

10. Mr. LANGLEY (New Zealand) said that his delegation welcomed the outcomes of the First Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and in particular the establishment of the Berlin Mandate working group. New Zealand would continue to support the development of practical, flexible and equitable measures to enable the international community to achieve the Convention's objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at levels that would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

11. Turning to the issue of small island developing States, he said that it was important to maintain the momentum and resolve which had been established at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In that regard, he welcomed the establishment of the Small Island Developing States Unit within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and supported the maintenance of a critical mass to ensure that the Unit carried out its important functions in support of the implementation of the Programme of Action.

12. States should be mindful that strengthening the capacity of organs, commissions and other bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action would entail a change of attitudes and priorities as well as improved efficiency and effectiveness. A larger and more expensive international infrastructure did not necessarily strengthen capacity.

13. His delegation supported the approach to the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDS/NET) and Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS/TAP), proposed in the Secretary-General's report. Noting the references in the report to the valuable contribution made by regional bodies, he said that New Zealand was committed to ensuring that the South Pacific Forum and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme continued to play a vital role in the South Pacific region.

14. Mr. DJABBARY (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, particularly in developed countries, continued to be the main cause of the degradation of the environment; responsibility for combating that degradation rested mainly with those countries. The tendency to impose unrealistic standards and requirements on the industries and products of developing countries and to propose or adopt financial policies which were detrimental to those countries' economic and social development, under the pretext of environmental protection, was therefore inconsistent with the spirit and provisions of environmental agreements, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The chances of achieving the objectives of the Convention would remain slim as long as the parties to annex I to the Convention failed to meet their commitments in a comprehensive manner which took fully into account the social and economic aspects of climate change.

15. While stressing the crucial importance of controlling greenhouse gases, he noted that setting reduction objectives without taking into account the possible negative economic impact on developing countries to which the Convention gave special attention could not be regarded as a comprehensive approach for the implementation of the Convention. It would be unfair and also inconsistent with the provisions of the Convention to ask developing countries to bear heavy economic losses resulting from the implementation of proposed measures when they were already suffering from degradation of their environments due to the actions of others.

16. Ms. PLAISTEAD (United States of America) noting that a variety of important conventions and mechanisms had been adopted for the protection of the resources of small island developing countries, said that cooperation could also be achieved in the absence of agreement. For instance, the call for a coral reef initiative put forward by her delegation at the Global Conference on Small Island Developing States had been taken up by Governments of Pacific countries and had resulted in a call to action and a framework for action in support of the International Coral Reef Initiative. Those two documents had provided a starting-point for six regional coral reef workshops which would define and address regional needs and priorities, as well as catalyse the development of national coral reef initiatives. The results of those workshops would be shared with the Commission on Sustainable Development.

17. The recently approved GEF operational strategy had recognized the special situation of small island developing States and identified actions which would fall within the purview of GEF.

18. Her Government was collaborating with others to develop an international management initiative for the Queen conch, a species which was on the verge of extinction as a result of overfishing and habitat destruction. She hoped to see a cooperative mechanism developed which would permit the recovery and sustainable development of that coral reef fishery throughout the Caribbean Sea region.

19. At the recent conference of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hosted by her Government, practical solutions had been sought to the difficult issues raised by land-based sources of pollution and degradation of the coastal environment and a programme of action had been established which reflected those concerns. Her Government wanted to work together with the Governments of the small island developing States on key concerns such as biodiversity, habitat protection, integrated coastal management and the exchange of information and would continue to follow up on both programmes of action through bilateral programmes, the World Bank, GEF, the regional development banks and other multilateral assistance agencies. Moreover, the United States would continue to promote policies and procedures that encouraged sustainable development and would continue to support innovative and alternative methods, such as reform of regional development banks and increased opportunities for micro-enterprise financing. Her Government had supported the regional mechanisms called for in the programme of action adopted at the Global Conference and had provided necessary assistance to the South Pacific region for such a mechanism.

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20. The high incidence of natural disasters in the Caribbean in the previous year had demonstrated once again the vulnerability of small island developing States and the United States had accordingly taken action to assist by adding to the early warning capabilities in both the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

- (f) WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (A/50/399)
- (g) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (A/50/330 and Corr.1)
- (h) BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT (A/50/417)
- (i) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/396, A/50/551)
- (j) UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE ON OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION (A/50/501)
- (k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (A/C.2/50/8)

21. Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries (A/50/396), said that it focused principally on the issue of coordination within the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty, particularly as it related to the formulation of integrated policies in the follow-up to recent major global conferences and to the delivery of assistance to the poor at the country level. The report classified the activities of the United Nations system into eight broad categories: analytical work, income-generating activities, labour-intensive public works, access to basic services, social funds and safety nets, participation of the poor, targeted efforts towards reducing discrimination and monitoring of poverty changes.

22. It was at the country level that the extent to which efforts to eradicate poverty had been successful must be measured. A number of instruments were in place at the country level to facilitate the coordination of the work of the United Nations system in that area. Considerable effort was being made to involve non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and the poor themselves in a decentralized approach which was intended to take decisions and resources to the grass-roots level.

23. The problem of poverty raised a number of common issues across countries, regions and sectors which called for coordination at the inter-agency level. The agencies recognized the desirability of common approaches to poverty assessment, data collection and evaluation, coherence and consistency between macroeconomic and social policies, the feminization of poverty and popular participation in the formulation of poverty eradication programmes. Recognizing the need for strong inter-agency support for action at the country level, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had recently decided to establish three inter-agency task forces to follow up the cross-cutting themes at recent global conferences, all of which were closely related to poverty eradication.

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24. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the draft programme for the observance of the International year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) (A/50/551), he said that the Year would provide an occasion to raise public awareness, mobilize resources, galvanize action at all levels and set in place the institutional arrangements for the effort to create societies free of poverty through action at the national level and with appropriate international support. He drew particular attention to the objectives, principles and theme for the Year set out in paragraphs 11-14 of the document. The Year provided an opportunity for a more focused, comprehensive and cohesive system-wide effort.

25. Document A/50/417, which contained the report of the Secretary-General on entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development, was based on inputs from more than 20 organizations of the United Nations system. The report showed that the system played an important role in assisting Governments to develop national capacities to promote entrepreneurship, to design and implement privatization policies and to create enabling environments - which included the provision of an adequate social and economic infrastructure - to permit the harnessing of market forces. Assistance for the development of small enterprises and for women entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas was designed to enhance the status of women and to help reduce poverty. He gave a number of examples of successful coordination of relevant activities in the United Nations system.

26. Turning to document A/50/501, which contained the report of the United Nations Panel on Opportunity and Participation, he said that a substantial part of the report dealt with the promotion of micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises. It provided specific examples of successful policy initiatives in areas ranging from access to credit and training in entrepreneurial skills to land tenure and regulatory questions, and drew attention to the particular obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs. The report also discussed the importance of an adequate enabling environment at the national and international levels. The Panel hoped that its analysis would be viewed as a first step towards the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development. He expressed his deep appreciation for the financial support provided for the work of the Panel by the Governments of Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia.

27. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on effective mobilization and integration of women in development: gender issues in macroeconomic policy-making and development planning (A/50/399), he noted that previously unavailable statistics, published in 1991 and 1995, had shown that there were significant and measurable gender differences in key economic indicators. Those statistics permitted a comparison of the situations of women and men in 1970, 1980 and 1990 and for the first time permitted the extrapolation of trends. The statistics, together with other information from organizations of the United Nations system, showed that women were increasingly significant economic actors in the global economy and confirmed that certain economic policies and development strategies had the potential to liberate and strengthen women's skills and contributions whereas others intensified the conditions which prevented that from happening. The report indicated that unless economic trends were analysed from a gender perspective and unless national and international economic policies were formulated taking into account, inter alia, differences

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between women and men in terms of opportunities, preferences and outcomes, many of those policies would be ineffective from the outset.

28. Mr. LAWRENCE (United Nations Development Programme), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on developing human resources for development (A/50/330), recalled that it had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 48/205, which emphasized the importance of coordinated, cross-sectoral and integrated approaches, covering various dimensions of public policy, such as health, housing, communications, education and training, science and technology and employment. Each of those dimensions, if well-coordinated and sensitive to changing needs, could contribute its part within a collectively supported enabling environment for broader social development, as called for in Chapter I of the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development.

29. Earlier approaches to human resources development had gradually given way to more gender-sensitive, decentralized and participatory frameworks which sought to foster human resourcefulness through support of public policy and services across many sectors. In many of the less developed countries, structural adjustment, downsizing of public sectors and sluggish growth had exacerbated pressures on human resources development delivery systems. The report therefore defined human resources development, from a public policy perspective, in terms of mutually beneficial strategies for empowering people by fostering the contributory capacities that they could bring to the improvement of their own quality of life and that of others in their families, communities, enterprises and societies. Human resources development thus was a major factor in poverty prevention as a cross-cutting theme dealt with at recent major global conferences.

30. The report reviewed current problems which Governments faced in meeting their countries' human resources needs. Bearing in mind in particular the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the report presented factors which both constrained and enhanced the trend towards more integrated human resources development approaches. The bulk of the report documented examples of the support given by the United Nations system and focused explicitly on intersectoral applications at the regional and country levels. It also provided a review of the implications for human resources development strategies of the Copenhagen commitments to social development, and an overview of conclusions, with recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

31. Ms. MENENDEZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that it was essential to combat poverty if sustainable development was to be achieved. Some 70 per cent of people living in poverty were women and the feminization of poverty was increasing disproportionately. It was therefore essential to implement macroeconomic policies and development strategies that fully integrated the gender perspective. The World Summit for Social Development had reaffirmed the importance of a comprehensive approach to poverty and the need for integrated and multidimensional strategies for poverty eradication. The empowerment of people, and of women in particular, must be a central component of such strategies.

32. Governments bore the primary responsibility for formulating appropriate strategies, policies, programmes and actions to combat poverty; the effort required sound macroeconomic policies, structural changes and the mobilization of domestic resources, inter alia, through more equitable tax regimes and a reduction in military expenditures. In developing countries, an active private sector, including the informal sector - whose linkages with the formal sector should be strengthened - and small and medium-sized enterprises provided the principal means to generate productive employment. The State should create an enabling environment for the development of the private sector and should implement active social policies. Funding for basic social services should be increased. In that connection, the 20/20 initiative contained in the Copenhagen Programme of Action could prove valuable. Poverty eradication strategies also required a participatory approach to development and respect for human rights. Specific measures were needed to address the impact of poverty on women and children.

33. The report of the Secretary-General on developing human resources for development (A/50/330) contained very useful recommendations with regard to the need for an integrated approach to the subject, which was crucial for combating poverty. It was imperative to ensure full and equal access to education for girls and women.

34. International cooperation and assistance were crucial, in particular for the poorest countries and the most vulnerable sectors of society. The States members of the European Union reaffirmed their commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance. She took note of the fact that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the International Labour Organization recognized the importance of devoting priority to poverty eradication. However, system-wide coordination often was lacking and the United Nations had found it difficult to develop an integrated approach to the multidimensional aspects of poverty and to reach women, who were particularly affected. The Copenhagen Programme of Action provided an opportunity for the United Nations development system to attain that objective. The Commission for Social Development should play a central role in assisting the Economic and Social Council with its coordinating functions. She welcomed the recent decision by ACC to establish three task forces to follow up on recent global conferences. At the field level, the resident coordinator system, the country strategy note and the programme approach could play a key role in coordinating efforts to combat poverty. The International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) should be an occasion for the expeditious and effective implementation at the national and international levels of the provisions of the Copenhagen Programme of Action, in particular those relating to poverty eradication.

35. Turning to the question of business and development, she underscored the importance of the partnership between the public and the private sectors. Governments should contribute by creating an enabling environment for the private sector. Institutions representing private enterprises, such as federations, chambers and associations, had a major role to play. Public enterprises should be managed the way businesses were. The United Nations system could contribute by providing technical assistance for the development of national capacities to promote entrepreneurship, through the design and

implementation of privatization policies and by disseminating data and information on relevant successful undertakings. The delegations on whose behalf she was speaking welcomed the fact that at its ninth session the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would discuss the relationship between business and development with a view to strengthening the contributions of the United Nations system in that area.

36. Turning to the question of women in development, she said that the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women represented a major step forward for the advancement of women. She also welcomed the comprehensive Human Development Report for 1995, which focused on women in development and had provided valuable input to the Beijing Conference. There was a consensus, embodied in the Platform for Action, that women's full participation in all spheres of economic and social life was of fundamental importance for sustainable development.

37. The number of women employed outside the home was increasing throughout the world, although more slowly in developing countries. The Platform for Action pointed out the need to adopt macroeconomic policies and development strategies which addressed the issue of women and poverty. The European Union attached great importance to the advancement of women in the economic field, inter alia, by ensuring them access to resources, employment, income-generating activities, markets and trade. All forms of employment discrimination based on gender must be eliminated.

38. Insufficient attention to gender analysis had meant that the contributions and concerns of women were too often ignored. Special attention should be paid to the plight of women in rural areas. Unless policy formulation took the gender perspective into account, significant economic inefficiency and resource misallocations were likely to persist, which in turn would result in decreased economic growth, and the increased feminization of poverty. Public policies and public expenditure should promote gender equality.

39. In that context it was essential to ensure that women had equal rights and access to economic resources and savings. Political and legal measures were needed to ensure access for women to credit through established financial services, credit institutions and commercial banks. Unreasonable collateral requirements and high transaction costs, which acted as barriers, should be reviewed in order to enable women to obtain credit. Strategies aimed at promoting sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities for income generation among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty should be developed. Legal frameworks should be modified in order to equalize opportunities and ensure women's access to and ownership of land and property. Girls and women should have access to education and vocational training throughout their lives. Education training and retraining programmes for women should be developed and implemented to enable them to attain skills to meet the needs of a changing socio-economic context with a view to improving their employment opportunities.

40. In order to obtain a coherent approach by the United Nations system in its support for income-generating activities for women, in particular credit schemes, the European Union urged the inter-agency mechanisms to give priority

to the development of common guidelines and strategies for those activities. The United Nations Development Fund for Women would have a key role to play within the United Nations system in promoting the full participation of women in sustainable development. However, final decisions regarding the nature of that role should not be taken until the results of the independent evaluation commissioned by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund were known. In all processes of follow-up to conferences, the issue of women in development should be addressed by the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies. It was to be hoped that the Committee would give more attention to women's issues in the future and would cooperate in that regard with the Third Committee. Women should participate fully and on an equal basis in decision-making processes in all avenues of life, including the economic field.

41. Mr. BIAOU (Benin), speaking on sub-item 95 (i), said that the activities to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty had not only contributed to sensitizing public opinion and policy-makers but, above all, had allowed people living in poverty to participate in events and had given them hope.

42. With respect to the draft programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, his delegation supported the proposals contained in paragraphs 13 and 14 of document A/50/551. In order to achieve a certain balance in the draft programme, another two subsections should be added dealing with activities at the regional and subregional level and at the international level respectively. Bearing in mind that Africa was the continent most severely affected by all forms of poverty, he expressed surprise at the fact that, unlike the other regional commissions, the Economic Commission for Africa had not proposed any activities for the Year. He hoped that that would be remedied before publication of the final programme of activities.

43. The report on international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries (A/50/396) was valuable overall and responded generally to resolution 48/184 of 21 December 1993; however it lacked details on specific actions undertaken by United Nations bodies with respect to the role and needs of women living in poverty or the actions taken to improve social services in deprived urban areas. Similarly, no specific action had apparently been taken to mobilize and redistribute resources with a view to eradicating poverty. He welcomed the initiative taken by the Administrator of UNDP to create a poverty elimination fund which would assist countries in the preparation of national anti-poverty strategies as agreed at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. Given the scope and complexity of the problem he called for the establishment, within the Secretariat, of a separate entity responsible for all issues relating to the eradication of poverty.

44. Sir John KAPUTIN (Papua New Guinea), speaking on agenda item 95 (j), he recalled that his country had played an important role in promoting the concept of opportunity and participation which had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/60 establishing the United Nations Panel on Opportunity and Participation; it had also contributed \$100,000 towards the Panel.

45. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations should be more than an occasion for celebration; it should positively address a very significant part of the world's population, the often overlooked grass-roots people in developing countries. Empowering people and societies through innovations in technology and human capacity-building was vitally important for equitable and sustainable development. It was also a means of forging a stronger, more genuine and more equitable partnership, overcoming the perpetual dependency created by technological gaps, trade barriers and limited access to financial markets.

46. In Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific region, opportunity and participation had been limited by shortcomings in administrative, economic, legal and other systems which had been inherited, imposed or otherwise imported from the outside. Other difficulties, he acknowledged, were self-inflicted or home-grown. The Panel had rightly drawn attention, in paragraph 25, to the mesoeconomic policies that linked macroeconomic policies to the behaviour of economic agents at the micro-level.

47. The real question at stake was how to transform the recommendations contained in the report into effective reference points for practical guidance to enable people to secure opportunities and broaden their participation in the economic development of their countries. He believed that more could be learned from others, particularly from their experience in developing macroeconomic policy and approaches and techniques to micro-economic management to specific target groups. The regional commissions should draw on the Panel's work and incorporate its ideas into their future work programmes and strategies. The process would naturally filter into national and subsequently into local governments. It was important to go beyond capacity-building and ensure that, once people had secured the capacity, they were provided with opportunities and appropriate support to manage and own investments in such activities as micro-enterprise development. Financing of development projects was crucial. Macroeconomic and financial sector reforms had not succeeded in providing for the credit needs of the bottom 50-70 per cent of the economically active population. He therefore welcomed the World Bank's decision to establish a special loans facility for the poorest of the poor.

48. Although markets were widely regarded as the most effective means of increasing opportunity and participation, experience suggested that markets alone could do little for people without capital or skills of their own. Accordingly, he urged the specialized agencies to address issues such as how to remove obstacles encountered by such persons when seeking loans, in particular the insistence of lenders on collateral, and pointed out that the belief of traditional financial institutions that small loans were unduly costly was not necessarily correct.

49. In view of the dire financial crisis facing the Organization, he would merely suggest that existing bodies, including the Commission on Sustainable Development, should draw upon the report of the Panel in future multi-sectoral approaches on sustainable development. There were a number of issues that the report did not address. Specifically, its recommendations could have gone further and given specific directions to relevant United Nations agencies or outlined possible strategies for implementation. However, he expressed appreciation for the support that the United Nations Initiative on Opportunity

and Participation had received from a cross-section of the world and reaffirmed its relevance to the economic and social development activities of the United Nations system.

50. Mr. FEDORTCHENKO (Russian Federation) said that the report of the Secretary-General on entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development (A/50/417) was of interest to countries with economies in transition and his delegation supported its conclusions. They should be followed by actual assistance from Governments.

51. Support for national businesses was at the basis of his Government's economic policy. It was engaged in stimulating private enterprise at both the federal and regional levels, and had carried out special programmes in more than 60 regions. In addition, the Government was rapidly creating the necessary infrastructure for entrepreneurship and, in 1995, the number of persons employed in the non-governmental sector had exceeded 10 million. However, the development of private enterprise had not progressed as quickly as anticipated in the areas of production and agriculture. The root of the problem lay in an inadequate flow of investment, including foreign investment, into those sectors and a lack of development of the market infrastructure. The United Nations could take a more active role in promoting international cooperation in that area.

52. He noted with satisfaction the recent decision of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to create three inter-agency task forces in areas closely connected to human resource development. Their major thrust should be to increase opportunities for participation for the most vulnerable groups, promote the development of entrepreneurship and improve the work of the State sector, create social safety nets during the restructuring process and enhance the role of civil society and non-governmental organizations. The international community's awareness of the severity of the social problems occurring in countries with transition economies was reflected in commitment 8 of the Copenhagen Declaration; his delegation hoped that awareness would be followed by an appropriate response.

53. With regard to the eradication of poverty, his delegation supported the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report (A/50/551) and was ready to participate in the observance of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

54. Ms. ASHIPALA-MUSAVYI (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on women in development (A/50/399) which, while giving a fair analysis on the usage of gender as a variable in economic policy-making and development planning in general, should have brought out more clearly the diverse impact of economic policy-making and development on women, especially in the rural areas.

55. The member States of SADC recognized the significant contribution that women made to economic activity and the major force they represented for change and development in all sectors of the economy. Reintegrating women in development first and foremost meant involving them both in education and

training, involving women in decision-making structures as well as addressing the overall discrimination against them. It also meant empowering women inter alia by providing girls with greater education and training particularly in science and technical subjects.

56. The heavy burden of poverty continued to fall disproportionately on women. Not only did they lack sufficient access to the economic and other resources necessary to improve and sustain their livelihood, but they were prevented from becoming involved in development activities by the legal constraints which treated women as minors. Despite the political will prevailing among Governments, resources for poverty eradication programmes were severely limited due to budgetary constraints. That realization had prompted women in southern Africa both from government and non-governmental organizations to meet in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1994 to determine how they could be active agents as well as beneficiaries of national and regional development. They had adopted action plans calling upon the Governments of southern Africa to create an enabling environment for women's economic participation through policy measures and legal instruments.

57. Education and training opportunities offered to women had in most cases contributed to reinforcing traditional female roles. A major challenge confronting the Governments of the region was how to provide education and training to women to help them to overcome the effects of past discrimination which had often prevented them from acquiring the skills necessary to find employment or be self-employed. Most of the educational systems in the region were being restructured to increase exposure of women and girls to science and technology. She called on the international community to support the efforts of the Governments of southern Africa by providing scholarships to women and girls specifically for science, technical and vocational training.

58. Women constituted the majority of persons engaged in subsistence agriculture which provided food for the majority of the people in the subregion. Yet, they continued to lack equal access and control over land, capital, technology and other means of production. In most countries of the region, women constituted less than 30 per cent of those employed in the formal sector. For many, the informal sector was the only employment alternative. The Governments of the region recognized the urgent need to provide public infrastructure to ensure market access for women and to develop their entrepreneurial skills and would need assistance to meet that challenge. They had adopted national population development policies aimed at eradicating poverty and improving women's health, particularly that of rural women and women with disabilities. Priority was being given to off-farm enterprises that would create income for rural women. SADC member States echoed the call made in the Platform for Action to multilateral donors and regional development banks to review and implement policies to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reached women in rural and remote areas.

59. They also called on the international community to make new and renewable resources available for the implementation of the Platform for Action. A regional workshop would soon be held in southern Africa to work out a follow-up programme for the Platform for Action. She expressed the hope that the international community, the United Nations and the non-governmental

organizations would give their support to make the participation of women a reality in the economic development of the region. She took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/50/744) and said that its recommendations should be considered very seriously.

60. The Division for the Advancement of Women which was the principal entity within the United Nations responsible for gender issues required further strengthening. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) should be given all the necessary resources to increase options and opportunities for women's economic development in developing countries.

61. Mr. BONNEBERG (Marshall Islands) noted that his Government had received no end of good advice on how to improve its economy. However, when it had been prepared to follow that advice and had requested outside assistance for the implementation of the measures it had been met with silence. The principle of the free market embodied in the World Trade Organization should not simply mean that the developing countries should open their markets to luxury goods from the developed world. Lack of market access granted to developing country products caused by new, non-tariff barriers must be addressed urgently. It would be impossible to develop an entrepreneurial private sector in developing countries if there were no markets where their goods could be sold. His Government was not advocating new barriers to protect its industries, but fair trade and adequate assistance when conditions set by the multilateral financial institutions had been met.

62. Turning to the report of the United Nations Panel on Opportunity and Participation (A/50/501) he said that the section on small enterprises shed much light on the problems faced by entrepreneurs in developing countries. His delegation supported the section on "Insights and Recommendations", and wished to see that report make a substantial contribution to the ongoing work on the agenda for development.

63. Mr. PAWAE (India) said that the many dimensions of poverty were expressed in the form of hunger, illiteracy, lack of education, drinking water, minimum health facilities, shelter and employment opportunities. The essential origins of poverty lay in a lack of income or command over the market, which was linked to the pattern of income distribution in a country. Strategies to conquer that malaise must combine efforts at general economic growth with situation specific approaches. For example, the immediate origin of poverty could be due to an area having poor production potential in terms of resource endowment or to its being inaccessible. Attention should also be given to the needs of those who might have been deprived of benefits for historical reasons. The gender issue was equally important.

64. In India, programmes to guarantee employment to the rural poor and unemployed youth, meet the nutritional, educational and health needs of women and promote their empowerment, and mass literacy programmes were central to the realization of situation-specific strategies. Basic to the success of any strategy and/or programme was the involvement of the people themselves in designing and implementing those programmes in order to generate a sense of ownership.

65. In the light of the commitments entered into for poverty eradication, at the World Summit for Social Development, it was particularly unfortunate, however, that prospects for official development assistance had become uncertain.

66. Mr. WEIGEN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that rural women, as producers, providers and caretakers of families, were pivotal agents of food security and sustainable development. Accordingly, their advancement must be promoted in a more systematic and comprehensive manner. Natural resource management and environmental protection, as part of a holistic, inter-disciplinary approach to sustainable development, must reflect the importance of gender. FAO had been actively involved in preparations for the Beijing Conference and was pleased that the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action highlighted women's access to land, improved technologies, support services and markets, while recognizing their indigenous knowledge and contribution to maintaining biodiversity.

67. FAO had extensively revised its own 1989 Plan of Action for Women in Development, placing a sharper focus on rural women in statistics, gender analysis training, policy advice, participatory development, information collection and dissemination, and inter-agency collaboration. In fulfilment of its mandate for poverty eradication, FAO had introduced a special programme on food production in support of food security in low-income food deficit countries. The recent restructuring of FAO had ushered in a new focus on food security and on poverty eradication through the broad-based growth of poor agrarian economies. Detailed and comparative analysis of world poverty in different regions and a database and indicators allowing for its measurement were a part of that strengthened effort, along with the emphasis on the crucial role of rural institutions and civil society. Considering that over 60 per cent of the world's population lived in and derived their livelihood from rural areas, it was difficult to overstate the key role of investment in broadly-based rural growth, dynamic institutional mechanisms and a transformed agrarian base as the three critical elements of genuine and lasting poverty eradication.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION
Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Thursday, 16 November 1995
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman Mr. STADTHAGEN (Nicaragua)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Petreski, Mr. Stadthagen (Nicaragua),
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolutions A/C.2/50/L.17, L.18, L.19 and L.20

1. Mr. MANALO (Philippines) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.17 on international trade and development on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, draft resolutions A/C.2/50/L.18 on economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries A/C.2/50/L.20 on the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.19 on specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries on behalf of the Group of 77, China and the sponsors indicated in the document.

2. Mr. MBATHA (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that it was a great honour for African delegations that the ninth session of UNCTAD was to be held in Africa. The Conference would provide an appropriate forum to address various fundamental issues regarding trade and development which were universal in scope. The SADC countries urged Member States to participate in the Conference at the highest possible level, since its success depended on the commitment and participation of all.

(k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.21

3. Mr. MANALO (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.21 on the World Food Summit.

AGENDA ITEM 96: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.22

4. Mr. MANALO (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/50/L.22 on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, with an oral amendment.

AGENDA ITEM 95: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(continued)

- (f) WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/399)
- (g) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/330 and Corr.1)
- (h) BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/50/417)
- (i) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued) (A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/396, A/50/501)
- (j) UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE ON OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION (continued) (A/50/8)
- (k) FOOD AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/50/8)

5. Mr. TIENDREBEOGO (Burkina Faso) said that development planning should take into account women's economic and social role beginning with the formulation of development policies, in order to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

6. Nevertheless, the report of the Secretary-General on effective mobilization and integration of women in development confirmed that, despite that awareness and the recognition of the essential and decisive role of women in the process of sustainable development, discrimination persisted both in the conception of models and in the enjoyment of the fruits of development. That was the root cause of existing imbalances in wages and access to productive employment, as well as of the innumerable obstacles that prevented women's spirit of entrepreneurship from being released.

7. In Burkina Faso, for example, women accounted for over half of the population and the majority of the workforce, but they were ranked lower than men in the basic sectors of education, literacy, vocational training, access to the means of production and enjoyment of the economic benefits they had helped to produce. Moreover, they constituted the core of the national economy through their participation in the informal or non-structured sectors, agriculture, livestock raising, crafts and food production.

8. Although legislation and educational measures adopted in Burkina Faso and its adherence to many international conventions and other instruments were important at face value for the liberation of women, activities to provide training in techniques for starting and running businesses were even more so, and most important were measures aimed at facilitating access to savings and credit, with the basic goal of giving impetus to women's creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

9. The Fund to Support the Paid Employment of Women, established in 1990 and strengthened financially in 1994 with the support of many national and international partners, was one of the efforts undertaken to combat poverty. It was undeniable that sustainable development would never be achieved without the eradication of poverty through comprehensive strategies coordinated at the

international and national levels. He paid tribute to the high quality of the efforts of the United Nations system in that area.

10. In line with the Copenhagen Programme of Action, Burkina Faso had instituted important practical courses on topics ranging from employment policies for youth to administrative decentralization that could be regarded as examples of cooperation and collaboration, particularly with the United Nations system.

11. Burkina Faso welcomed the proclamation of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, took note of the proposed activities and would work to guarantee its success.

12. Ms. HEYZER (United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) said that the cost of not investing in women was too high. Societies as a whole suffered major losses when women were poorly educated, in bad health and overworked, when they were excluded from many activities and prevented from participating in decision-making. It was unacceptable that as the twenty-first century approached, women made up 70 per cent of the world's absolute poor and two thirds of the world's illiterate people.

13. Women were currently asking for political will, accountability and resources for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and they wanted the key commitments undertaken by more than 100 countries and United Nations organizations to become realities in their daily lives.

14. Women must have access to economic resources and opportunities so that they could benefit from them on a sustainable basis. The key areas of the work of UNIFEM included globalization and economic reform, concentrating on trade and structural adjustment, sustainable livelihoods with a focus on enterprise development, and natural resource management.

15. In the political sphere the work of UNIFEM would concentrate on strengthening the role of women in governance and decision-making at all levels, human rights and violence against women, peace-building and conflict prevention. After helping women to defend their position effectively in global conferences, UNIFEM in its next phase of work would empower women to participate effectively in the implementation of the outcomes of conferences.

16. UNIFEM looked forward to providing technical support to the Resident Coordinator system, and to bringing country-level experience to bear on relevant aspects of the work of the system at the global level. To that end, UNIFEM would collaborate with Governments in the preparation of national action plans for the implementation and monitoring of the Platform. During the preparation for the Beijing Conference, UNIFEM had built partnerships, mechanisms and processes in several countries which could now be strengthened to assist in the implementation process.

17. However, the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action would require financial resources. UNIFEM needed to double its current resources, of \$12 million, in order to be able to move forward to the next phase of its work.

18. The Beijing Conference had been a success because Governments, the United Nations system, and women's groups had worked closely together. The momentum which had been built and the partnerships which had been created would be strong forces for achieving the implementation of the Platform. That was a debt owed by the international community to half of humanity and to the next generation, and UNIFEM firmly intended to play its part.

19. Ms. YANG Yanyi (China), referring to the sub-item entitled "Business and Development", said that the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Role of Enterprises in Development, created by UNCTAD, had achieved some results in the exchange of information regarding experience among a number of countries and in the analysis of issues related to the development of business and enterprises. Her delegation hoped that, on the basis of that work, UNCTAD would set priorities to promote enterprise-oriented technical cooperation and networking among national enterprises, and strengthen its multilateral programmes.

20. The State had the ability to create a favourable environment for enterprise development through, among other things, the adoption of measures to maintain macro-economic stability and reduce risks for enterprises; the formulation of rational policies concerning investment flows, productivity, management, environmental consequences and cost-effectiveness; and the provision of financial support.

21. Every country should be allowed to choose its own paths of economic development and forms of enterprise ownership. Since beginning its economic reforms, China had encouraged private individuals to undertake business initiatives and had paid great attention to the role of private enterprises in the economy and in development. Meanwhile, State-owned enterprises had been modernized and technological and management changes had been introduced. Large, medium-sized and small enterprises were currently flourishing in China.

22. Regarding the eradication of poverty, her delegation believed that to attain the goals set out at the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women it would be necessary, first, to accelerate economic development by stimulating production and construction, creating sources of employment, and increasing investment in human resources and in educational opportunities. In that respect the Government had an important role to play in organization, financial assistance and information. Secondly, measures must be adopted to meet the basic needs of the population, to avoid excessive demographic growth and to improve the status of women. Thirdly, all forms of international cooperation must be strengthened in order to translate into action the commitments made at a number of conferences and forums. The developed countries should undertake greater responsibility for the eradication of poverty throughout the world by establishing favourable terms of trade with developing countries, reducing the debt burden, stabilizing the prices of primary products, increasing official development aid and transferring technology. Fourthly, it was necessary to strengthen the coordination of all the activities of the United Nations system in the area of poverty eradication in order to improve the efficiency of international funds and projects.

23. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the eradication of poverty, a problem from which the country had suffered throughout its history.

Since the mid-1980s, a systematic large-scale campaign had been under way, enabling the poor population of the country to be reduced from 250 million to 70 million people, and vigorous measures were being taken to implement a national programme whose final goal was the eradication of absolute poverty by the end of the century. Despite the efforts which had been made China still had the greatest number of poor people in the world. The eradication of poverty among the Chinese people, who accounted for one fifth of the world's population, should be a collective endeavour on the part of the international community. The Chinese Government was ready to increase its cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations for that purpose.

24. Mr. CHOE Tong U (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), referring to the subject of women in development, said that it was essential that women should enjoy the same rights as men and that they should be able to play an important role in the fields of politics, the economy and culture. The success of the development process depended on the active participation of women.

25. In resolution 42/178 the General Assembly had recommended the intensification of efforts to promote the integration of women in development. The current session should take the necessary practical measures to speed up the implementation of that resolution and of the Beijing Platform for Action. That would require, firstly, the mobilization of the necessary financial resources, which would require the participation of the developed countries and international financial institutions. It was also necessary to enhance the role of the United Nations system in that area. In that regard, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should review the functions of the Commission on the Status of Women to enable the latter to effectively monitor and coordinate the implementation of the Platform for Action.

26. Another challenge facing the international community was to resolve the issue of poverty at the earliest possible date. At the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly his delegation had stressed the urgency of taking measures to resolve the issue of poverty and had emphasized the importance of implementing General Assembly resolution 48/183 in which the Assembly had proclaimed 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. He welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to prepare the detailed programme for the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty as contained in document A/50/551. All activities to be undertaken on the occasion of the Year should be based on the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development with regard to the issue of poverty.

27. Mr. PAVLOV (Bulgaria) said that his country's process of transition and structural reforms had been extremely difficult and long. After five years of uncertainty and crisis, the country's economy was beginning to show some signs of recovery. The private sector, which currently accounted for 30 per cent of the gross national product, was very dynamic but was still heavily dependent on changes in the political environment. That sector's rapid expansion and the increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises had been the main features of the transition process in Bulgaria.

28. In Bulgaria, the Union for Private Economic Enterprise, which was a free, non-profit association of private companies and one of the most stable,

independent and dynamic forces for the promotion of economic recovery and growth in the country, urged all citizens to make their own decisions as to whether to become entrepreneurs, shareholders or to sell their vouchers. The Union provided consultancy, training and information services and its members based their activities on the principle of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that small and medium-sized enterprises were a key element for economic development.

29. Sustained macroeconomic stabilization depended on the effective restructuring of the enterprise sector. Today, no one in Bulgaria questioned the need to give priority to private companies, especially small ones, because they were more flexible and could adapt more easily and created new jobs. However, Bulgaria was the only country in Eastern Europe which lacked two prerequisites for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, namely, a consistent State policy and an executive State body for promoting the sector.

30. The problems facing the private sector in Bulgaria included: financial difficulties stemming from the lack of access to loans on preferential terms; the lack of an appropriate tax system and relevant legislation; bureaucratic obstacles; the absence of reliable information, consultancy and managerial services; and chaos in the public sector.

31. The private sector was of the view that the authorities must, inter alia, develop the labour market, prevent the formation of monopolies and guarantee free access to markets; provide basic order, strengthen institutions and fight crime; support entrepreneurial initiative, improve management, promote further structural changes, stimulate private investments, and reduce support for old industries with no future and direct investments to the private sector; improve access to credit, diversify sources of financing and take steps to protect businesses. Bulgaria also needed to be genuinely integrated into the European and world communities.

32. His country looked to the West for investments; however, its financial and legal structures were not attractive to potential investors. The Union for Private Economic Enterprise would like a more propitious climate to be created in order to attract both domestic and foreign investments. The current level of foreign investments was disappointing. Bulgaria's transition to a market economy would be impossible without greater foreign investment.

33. The economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations in response to regional crises were causing problems for his country. The private sector in Bulgaria, which had suffered as a result of the negative fallout from sanctions, should receive assistance from United Nations Member States and be allowed to participate in the rehabilitation programme for the former Yugoslavia. The losses suffered by the Bulgarian private sector alone as a result of the sanctions against Yugoslavia were estimated at \$3 billion.

34. He welcomed the leading role of the United Nations in the provision of technical assistance and financial support to promote entrepreneurship.

35. Mr. KARIM (Bangladesh) said he was happy to see that the eradication of poverty had received special attention at recent international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development, sometimes referred to as the "Poverty Summit".

36. Developing countries were faced with the problem of increasing poverty at a time of significant reductions in the total net resource flows from the international community. However, official development assistance continued to be the major source of external financing for most developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. Financial assistance on concessional terms could prevent further increases in the debt stocks and debt-servicing burdens of developing countries.

37. There were intricate links between trade, economic growth and poverty eradication. Increased trading opportunity for products from the developing countries could create employment and contribute to income generation. The ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would focus primarily on the promotion of international trade as an instrument of development in the post-Uruguay Round world. His delegation fully supported UNCTAD, as the sole entity in the United Nations system that dealt with development questions in a comprehensive manner. Given its experience and expertise, UNCTAD played a central role in the formulation of coherent approaches to development problems. It should be given the appropriate resources to be able to play its full role in the coming years.

38. His Government was giving priority to poverty eradication and had adopted far-reaching measures in that regard. Priority attention was being given to the agriculture, health, education and family welfare sectors and, currently, more than 30 per cent of the annual development budget was allocated to the social sectors. Bangladesh's food production had increased from 11 million tons in the early 1970s to nearly 20 million tons in the early 1990s. However, because of natural disasters, drought and desertification, optimum output had not been achieved. The systems of food distribution to the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups had been improved and food-for-work programmes were being implemented. A food security system had also been established to meet emergency needs. The Government was also helping to establish labour-intensive small industries in rural areas and encouraging both private and public efforts to provide credits on concessional terms to landless and marginal farmers. Local non-governmental organizations were providing loans to landless and destitute women in the villages who were self-employed.

39. Another increasingly pronounced phenomenon was the feminization of poverty in developing countries. His Government's development strategy catered to the special needs of women. A food-for-education programme and other incentive measures related to the girl child had been established within the overall framework of promotion of human resources development.

40. Lastly, there was a need to mitigate the impact of the structural adjustment and reform programmes pursued by the Bretton Woods institutions. Inevitably, it was the poorer sections of society which were the most severely

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affected by such programmes. His delegation firmly believed that the structural adjustment programmes should be reconsidered taking into account their negative impact on the poor.

41. Mr. ZYOSHINO (Japan) said that his delegation was pleased with the successful outcome of the conferences organized by the United Nations in Copenhagen and Beijing, in which the international community had affirmed its understanding of the important role played by women in development. However, gender issues had been "hidden by the invisible hand", particularly in decision-making and policy formulation, which had led to inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the implementation of policy. In response to that situation, the Beijing Conference had reaffirmed the importance of mainstreaming gender issues in all fields, in the belief that sustainable development could not be achieved without the full participation of women. The measures recommended at the Copenhagen and Beijing Conferences should lead to fundamental change, and must be applied immediately. Among them, the economic empowerment of women should be stressed, covering the questions of entrepreneurship, microeconomic policy-making and development planning, all of which were taken up in the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/399).

42. Primary responsibility for implementing action plans lay with Governments, but the international community must all support countries in their efforts to confront the situation. Japan, for its part, was promoting the integration of women in all aspects of development through the provision of official development assistance focusing on three priority areas: improvement of educational standards, promotion of health care and participation in economic and social activities. The official development assistance which Japan was providing for the implementation of WID-related projects had been increasing steadily in recent years and would continue to increase in the future. In order to promote the participation of women in development, his Government had created funds in UNDP and IFAD, and had contributed \$1 million to each of them; it had also increased its contribution to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, which had totalled \$1.5 million in 1995.

43. His delegation concurred with the view of the Secretary-General in his report (A/50/330) that the United Nations system should continue to move towards greater specificity in its definitions and conceptualization of human resource development as the keystone to empowerment in sustainable social development and that the shift in development paradigms towards people-centred and sustainable development necessitated renewed attention to the social as well as the economic implications of human resource development. Japan, as a country of limited natural resources, had made investment in human resources an important part of its own development process and, through its international development cooperation activities, had advocated that other countries do the same.

44. Referring to the sub-item "Business and development", he said that his Government recognized the important role that development of the business sector played in the overall economic and social development of a developing economy. In order to promote that sector, a Government could take such measures as market liberalization and deregulation, investment promotion, human resources and entrepreneurship development, and the enhancement of economic and social infrastructure. In that respect, his delegation noted the significant

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contribution made by United Nations agencies in that area, especially in developing human resources and fostering small and medium-sized enterprises, and welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the issue.

45. On the question of the eradication of poverty, he said that his delegation welcomed the proclamation of 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and the year 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. It fully supported the ideas presented in Commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration (A/CONF.166/9) and stressed the importance of action by all Member States to address the root causes of poverty and meet people's basic needs. Conditions in developing countries varied, as did the forms that poverty took; his delegation therefore felt that greater emphasis should be placed on a differentiated approach. To that end, it appealed to all developing countries to define and assess the nature of their own poverty before the Decade began so that the international community, and in particular donor countries and the relevant organs of the United Nations system, could support them more effectively in their efforts to overcome poverty.

46. Mr. BALZAN (Malta) said that, five decades after the establishment of the United Nations, the international community was still facing the problem of poverty, which affected one fifth of the total world population, mainly in the developing countries. The eradication of poverty, which required a consolidation of the efforts of all nations, had become an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.

47. In 1996, proclaimed as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, the world community had to ensure that the awareness generated on that vital issue was translated into effective and concrete measures directed at finding a permanent solution to the problem. In 1996, Governments and the different actors of society should focus their efforts on creating a better economic and social environment and should promote political commitments to mobilize resources for identifying strategies and implementing policies.

48. His delegation welcomed the decision taken by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to establish four groups to help Member States achieve the goals established in the major United Nations conferences held recently. It applauded the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

49. Sustainable development, which had gained increasing international endorsement, was the cure for poverty. A long-term approach, entailing the broadest involvement in the promotion of environmentally sustainable and equitable development, should be a primary objective of the Organization, particularly in a year dedicated to the eradication of poverty. In addressing the issues of development, the human dimension must not be lost from sight. The development of human resources should therefore be at the centre of any economic and social policy and should lead to an acceptable degree of economic growth.

50. At the national level, countries adopted approaches that were suited to their own socio-economic environments. Education remained the key element on which effective strategies could be based for implementing policies aimed at enhancing human resource development.

51. It was important to highlight the role of women in the development process: sustainable development could not be achieved without the involvement and integration of more than half the world's population. In Beijing, Governments had expressed their determination to promote people-centred sustainable development through basic education and primary health care for women and girls. The role of women in decision-making and in the management of economic resources, as a necessary tool to ensure sustainable development, should also be encouraged. The time had come for women to participate more effectively in the decision-making process which directly or indirectly affected communities in general, and women in particular, at both the national and community levels.

52. Although the time for reflection was rarely over, it was now up to the international community to live up to its responsibilities with regard to the millions of people still suffering from want, still looking for adequate shelter, still deprived of access to health care and education and still denied their human dignity.

53. Mr. SIMWABA (Togo) said that the 1990s, which had initially inspired hope among developing countries, had thus far been characterized by disenchantment and despair in many of them, especially the least developed countries in Africa. The fact that during the last five years, the elimination of poverty had been one of the priorities of the principal conferences held under United Nations auspices was due to the fact that the problem had become an ethical and universal one. One need only realize that currently, over a billion people were living in that alarming social situation, which was exacerbated by the stagnation and regression of production activities.

54. His delegation had noted with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the item, which set forth the policies and multisectoral strategies formulated by the organizations of the United Nations system on the basis of the Copenhagen consensus. However, it must be remembered that the commitments undertaken by the international community with regard to the strengthening of development had not produced the hoped-for results. That bitter realization should give rise to an objective evaluation of all the multilateral cooperation instruments and should lead to a search for better ways and means of giving a new impetus to that cooperation. The development programme currently being prepared must stress the social and economic development priorities set by the developing countries and must attach particular importance to the methods and approaches adopted with the aim of limiting poverty and making it possible for millions of people to lead decent lives.

55. The developing countries, aware that the elimination of poverty was fundamentally their responsibility, were increasing their efforts to establish social policies which took into account the primary and immediate concerns of their peoples, despite the Draconian nature of the structural adjustment programmes. In Togo, agriculture was being encouraged and given increased emphasis in order to ensure food self-sufficiency, and a broad programme of training and employment was being implemented to ensure that young graduates received appropriate training and found gainful employment. With a view to reducing unemployment and stimulating economic growth, his Government had undertaken numerous projects, including the establishment of a free zone for

industrial exports with the primary goal of stimulating the creation of jobs by setting up numerous factories.

56. The serious problem of poverty could not be solved at the national level owing to its numerous consequences; it required understanding, solidarity and generosity on the part of all those working for progress. For that reason, the international community must increase its participation in the effective implementation of the strategies, policies and programmes of action adopted at the various international conferences and including, among other activities, the mobilization of significant levels of resources. His delegation hoped that consideration of the question of poverty would result in the drafting of recommendations leading to a lasting solution of that serious problem, so as to promote social progress and better living conditions in accordance with the primary goals set forth in the Charter.

57. Mr. HAMAD (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the elimination of poverty had an important place in the United Nations system, particularly since the World Summit at Copenhagen.

58. At the recent joint meeting of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the theme of "Coordination of the activities of the United Nations system on the eradication of poverty", the members of the two Committees had expressed identical views on the multisectoral dimensions of poverty as a social, economic, cultural and political phenomenon and had agreed to further enhance coordination among United Nations entities with sectoral mandates in order to develop an international strategy to eradicate absolute poverty.

59. He expressed the satisfaction of UNESCO at the development of a number of forms of coordination with its international partners with regard to activities aimed at enhancing social development and, in so doing, eradicating poverty. Particularly noteworthy was the coordination established in connection with "Education for All" with the members of the Jomtien coalition, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank), which had the merit of addressing one of the most urgent prerequisites for poverty eradication: access to basic services, including education and the development of human resources. He also noted the cooperation between UNESCO and UNDP in the framework of the Technical Support Services mechanism for poverty eradication. That mechanism had enabled UNESCO to refine its approach and methodology and to develop its institutional capacities through studies of the education/ training/employment paradigm in a number of countries, including Rwanda, Togo, Guinea and Chad.

60. Outside the United Nations system, UNESCO was also endeavouring to mobilize the various components of civil society with a view to alleviating poverty. An outstanding model of such innovative partnership was the cooperation between UNICEF and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh for the purpose of improving educational opportunities for about 2 million women members of the bank. That pilot financial institution had demonstrated its readiness to participate in a basic education programme directly related to economic activities in Bangladesh and aimed at building the local capacity for the development and delivery of programmes for education and information. UNESCO planned to use that positive

experience to promote similar ventures elsewhere and to serve as a facilitator for the adaptation of the Grameen Bank experience to other Member States.

61. By virtue of its mandate, UNESCO was uniquely positioned to serve as an observatory for the study of the complex cultural and socio-economic phenomenon of poverty. With that in mind, UNESCO had established a Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) to act as a clearing-house on policies and strategies for combating marginalization and social exclusion. Of particular policy interest within the framework of MOST was the study of ways in which the process of intensifying globalization and other macro-trends were transforming cities to the increasing exclusion of underprivileged populations. There were a number of policy questions which were pertinent to the nature, causes and consequences of poverty in urban settings and which needed to be carefully studied.

62. UNESCO, which had mobilized all its energy to contribute to the World Summit for Social Development at all its stages, had placed the eradication of poverty at the top of its priority list. Furthermore, it planned to carry out projects aimed at strengthening endogenous capacities with emphasis on the active and voluntary participation of excluded groups such as unemployed, marginalized and poverty-stricken people through empowerment and training programmes in cooperation with non-governmental grass-roots organizations and civil society.

63. Mr. MOJSUKHOV (Belarus), referring to the sub-item "Business and development" and describing the process of economic reform in his country, said that the basic element of that process was the promotion of privatization and entrepreneurship in accordance with five priority goals: macroeconomic stabilization and sustainability of the national currency; restructuring of basic sectors of the economy; privatization of a major portion of State property; promotion of long-term domestic and foreign investment; and the smooth integration of the Belarus economy into the world economy.

64. Efforts to promote entrepreneurship at the national level had begun in December 1980 with the establishment of joint ventures, which currently totalled 1,700 and involved companies from 70 countries. In 1982 his country had begun a major reform, the purpose of which was to move from a centrally planned bi-level economy (federal and republic) to a mixed economy with an increasingly prominent role for domestic and international market forces. By the beginning of the 1990s there had been some 700 small and medium-sized foreign enterprises in Belarus, involving nearly 60 States and operating with foreign and mixed capital.

65. Crisis-prevention measures had been adopted to stabilize the exchange rate of the national currency and reduce inflation from the 30 to 40 per cent range to the current 2 to 3 per cent range. Belarus had also increased its exportation and importation levels and had met its debt obligations to multilateral and bilateral lenders.

66. Following a recent review of the priorities of the national structural reform programme by experts from the Bretton Woods institutions, a \$200 million line of credit over a 12-month period had been approved. It was hoped that UNDP

would play the role of catalyst in the execution of the first country programme for Belarus.

67. Foreign investment incentives had been provided, including the strengthening of the national system of guarantees for foreign investment and the elaboration of concrete plans for an economic free zone in his country.

68. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development (A/50/417), it was the view of his Government that assistance to countries with economies in transition was not fully operational and had not encompassed all the aspects stressed by the General Assembly. There was a clear geographical imbalance in United Nations assistance to promote entrepreneurship and privatization in countries with economies in transition: such assistance was apparently being provided preferentially to the countries of central and eastern Europe and the more advanced Baltic States.

69. The Secretary-General's report failed to provide a broad enough analysis of privatization and administrative deregulation. When those issues were next examined it was to be hoped that particular attention would be paid to the transformation of State monopolies into private monopolies, better wages and salaries for various sectors of the population, business management, stabilization control mechanisms, serious problems related to corruption, tax evasion, use of State and mixed funds for personal purposes and, a question of major significance, State regulation of market forces during the various phases of reform, in accordance with the conditions and various stages of the transition.

70. Mr. AL-THANI (Qatar) said that while the problem of poverty was world-wide, it was more serious in Africa than on any other continent: three quarters of the African States were developing countries which demonstrated the weakest growth rates and were burdened by the decline in commodity prices, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the effect of protectionist measures taken in developed countries, the reduction in official development assistance and, in particular, debt payment and servicing which represented for some countries half of their annual budget and, in the case of most African countries, a third of their export income.

71. Recent major international conferences had made an important contribution to the goal of eradicating poverty. The International Conference on Population and Development had emphasized that poverty was one of the main causes of suffering for individuals and had established a positive correlation between efforts to eradicate poverty and strategies to reduce population growth, stimulate economic development and improve environmental protection. It had also been pointed out that the eradication of poverty was vital to sustainable development and countries had been urged to accord priority to investments in human resources, in particular with regard to individuals who were unable to meet their basic needs.

72. The Fourth World Conference on Women had stressed the need for Governments and the international community to implement strategies to eradicate poverty because of its impact on women. Poverty had been one of the principal topics at

the World Summit for Social Development and the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action proposed the elaboration of national and international strategies based on economic growth and social development in order to put an end to poverty; they also urged countries to draw up national plans which would stimulate employment so that poverty could be eradicated and more attention could be focused on health, education, social services and consolidation of family income.

73. His country was working hard to establish mechanisms to implement the policies adopted and had achieved widespread social development under which all citizens enjoyed decent living conditions and had their basic needs satisfied in the areas of health care, education and social services. One particularly positive feature was the support provided to people in need by social security services. The Department of Social Security and Social Affairs was implementing a programme to raise the level of services in the country.

74. His Government was paying special attention to women by setting up training centres where they could earn diplomas qualifying them for employment in workshops. In addition, the Department of Social Security and Social Affairs was helping women to increase their contribution by setting up workshops for women where training centre graduates had good opportunities of finding work and marketing their products. Suitable housing had also been provided for people with limited incomes.

75. Ms. WONG (Australia) said that the Beijing Conference had been a great success and had recognized that a new kind of partnership based on equality between women and men was a condition for people-centred sustainable development. It was now necessary to ensure the implementation of the results of the Conference and their integration with the results of other recent United Nations world conferences.

76. Her delegation encouraged the United Nations funds and agencies to review and revise policies and procedures to meet the global priorities identified in the Platform for Action, and commended the agencies that had gone to Beijing and had made concrete commitments for programme implementation. The contributions to be made by non-governmental organizations and civil society in the follow-up and implementation of the results of the Conference were also important.

77. Since women living in developing countries experienced the most serious difficulties and disadvantages, her delegation considered that donor countries and agencies should use the Platform for Action as a guide for establishing the priority issues that should be incorporated in the planning and implementation of development assistance activities.

78. In Beijing, her Government had made a commitment to assist Pacific island countries in implementing their priority programmes and commitments made at the Conference. Consultations had already been held with a number of countries of the region, not only with Governments but also with women's groups, non-governmental organizations and community organizations at the national and regional level in order to identify programmes that would meet the priority concerns of women of the Pacific region.

79. Both the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/399) and the Platform of Action of the Beijing Conference drew attention to the lack of explicit consideration of women in policy formulation. The full implementation of the Platform for Action should ensure that women were more fully integrated into policy formulation. It would be helpful to begin by collecting gender-disaggregated data on economic activity and recognize the work of women in the domestic and other unremunerated sectors, which perhaps should be reflected in the satellite accounts of national accounts.

80. Mrs. PRADA de MESA (International Labour Organization) said that the World Summit for Social Development had focused global attention on the need to integrate development strategies and international economic cooperation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was prepared to reinforce the commitments made at the World Summit, in particular the goal of full employment through its active role in follow-up activities.

81. While global economic growth was a fundamental condition for achieving the goals of full employment and poverty reduction, it was in itself not sufficient. Workers required training and education to adapt to the current labour market. ILO promoted technical programmes for human resources development that introduced new working patterns and skills to disadvantaged workers, as well as policies to create a more flexible work force. In addition, it was necessary to reform certain labour institutions that could handicap efforts to keep up with the rapid changes in technology and adapt to the reality of international economic dependence.

82. The creation of high-quality jobs was a key to the eradication of poverty, and job creation was currently essentially the responsibility of the private sector. That was why any employment policy must involve both employers and workers. The State must guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms and an economic, legal and social framework that promoted enterprise and job creation in equitable conditions. It must associate employers and workers in the decision-making process because their cooperation and their commitment to the objective of full employment were crucial to its survival.

83. However, action at the national level would not be effective unless it was supported by international efforts to create a global economic environment conducive to worldwide employment growth. Macroeconomic, sectoral and social policies must mutually support each other in order to create stable conditions to stimulate enterprise and job creation, promote the proper functioning of the labour market, assist employers and workers in adapting to change and guarantee adequate social protection.

84. ILO was particularly interested in the Copenhagen commitment to full employment, which emphasized the need to establish stronger connections between the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations system. In that regard, ILO had already undertaken several initiatives with the aim of engaging in more frequent dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions.

85. Miss ROYO RUIZ (Panama) said that, while the status of women had generally improved over the past 20 years, women still experienced major inequalities with respect to men. The level of women's participation in the workforce continued to be low. In Latin America, working women accounted for only 34 per cent of the economically active population, including the informal sector of the economy, with unstable remuneration and limited access to the training and technical resources associated with increased productivity. Moreover, working women were highly represented in the service sector and underrepresented in the industrial sector, management and executive positions. The inequality of opportunities affected women's professional and work life in the areas of remuneration, social services and job advancement and promotion.

86. The Regional Programme of Action for the Women of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1995-2001, adopted at the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin American and the Caribbean, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, stressed the need to introduce the issue of gender into economic development policies in order to ensure the full participation of women in the development process and correct existing imbalances, while the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development irrefutably demonstrated that the time had come for the full integration of women into the development process, especially in the planning of strategies and the formulation of macroeconomic policies.

87. Much more resources should be allocated to the training of women and the implementation of national policies that supported savings, credit and loans for women. It was also necessary to support micro-enterprises managed by women and facilitate women's inclusion in the formal sector, not only in cities but also in rural areas, and also ensure equality in employment and remuneration.

88. The concept of sustainable development was unthinkable unless societies made sufficient efforts to achieve equal opportunities for women and men in economic activities.

89. Mr. CHIRANOND (Thailand) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He drew attention to the Secretary-General's report on developing human resources for development (A/50/330), which contained a wealth of facts, useful concepts and relevant experiences from a number of countries. His delegation supported the view expressed in the report that each country must develop its human resources in an integrated manner, and felt that the United Nations system could play an important role in that area.

90. In Thailand rapid urbanization, population growth and increased integration into the global economy had affected the environment, family institutions and traditional values, and had created income disparities. To cope with those challenges, the Government of Thailand had organized a number of meetings, in which all sectors of society had participated, to map out guidelines for the eighth national development plan. At those meetings consensus had been reached that development should focus on human beings as the centre of society and national development. Thus, in the next stage of the national development strategy, human resources development, rather than trade and industry, would be given priority.

91. Thailand adhered to the current concept of national development based on the promotion of education, housing, sanitation, primary health care, safe drinking water, poverty alleviation and eradication, employment opportunities, environmental conservation and the role of women. In addition, Thailand's new development strategy took into account not only the material but also the spiritual well-being of individuals, and incorporated the promotion of family values and Buddhist principles. One of the main objectives of that strategy was to ensure security of life and property and to establish a just social order in which citizens would be able to enjoy their rights and discharge their duties.
92. Since different areas of Thailand were at different levels of development, another main objective of the strategy was improving income distribution, creating employment and basic infrastructure in rural areas, and decentralizing local authority. Educational opportunities would also be expanded in all provinces; the Government had committed \$27 billion to that objective, and underprivileged and low-income students of both sexes would receive assistance to continue their studies.
93. Human resource development, improving the status of women, poverty eradication and the role of the private sector were closely interrelated themes. It was therefore important that Governments should take a multisectorial and multidimensional approach and that United Nations agencies should be better coordinated at the country level in order to accommodate the real needs of developing countries, particularly in eradicating poverty.
94. Thailand's strategy for eradicating poverty had a national component, the objectives of which coincided with those of the development strategy, and an international component, which involved promoting bilateral cooperation with various developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and in Africa. In 1995 the Government had allocated \$9 million to the Thai International Cooperation Programme. Thailand also contributed \$1 million annually to United Nations trust funds, despite being a developing country with a substantial portion of its population living below the poverty line. It therefore appealed to the industrialized countries to honour their commitment to meet the agreed official development assistance goal. At the same time he thanked the donor countries that had met or exceeded the level of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP).
95. Concerning the role of the private sector in development, he said that his country had always attached great importance to free trade and had given special attention to the private enterprise sector. Currently the Government of Thailand was concentrating on two objectives: reform of a majority of State-owned enterprises and opening up opportunities for the private sector in the delivery of services. Private sector participation from overseas was also encouraged for projects which required large investments and high technology. Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular had been promoted because of their innovative nature and their ability to adapt to the provincial environment.
96. His delegation appreciated the efforts of United Nations specialized agencies to implement at the national level the commitments assumed in the Jakarta Plan of Action and reaffirmed its support for the United Nations

International Development Organization (UNIDO), UNCTAD and UNDP as well as the regional commissions.

97. Mr. SHRESTHA (Nepal) welcomed the decision by the United Nations to observe 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. Needless to say, the greatest victims of poverty were the least developed countries and the land-locked developing countries. Since the fight against poverty had to be waged on various fronts over a long period of time, his delegation urged that the General Assembly should at its fiftieth session declare a decade for the eradication of poverty, beginning in 1997.

98. Most of the population of the least developed countries, in some cases as much as 60 or 70 per cent, lived below the poverty line. To avoid a vicious cycle of poverty, overall economic growth must be ensured in order to guarantee that its benefits spread down to the poorest families in society and income-generating opportunities must be created for the poor.

99. If the development strategy was viable, poverty ratios could be brought down significantly even without spectacular economic growth. Although there was a high degree of uniformity in the approach and content of developing countries' poverty alleviation programmes, the results varied enormously. United Nations bodies and agencies could play an important role, not only in formulating strategies, but also in disseminating information on the experiences of individual countries. That information could be especially important for least developed countries undertaking mid-term evaluations of their programmes, since they could then apply corrective measures.

100. His delegation believed that one effective way of attacking poverty was to encourage small enterprises and micro-enterprises through entrepreneurship-development programmes and micro-financing projects, since that created employment and generated income. Similarly, special attention needed to be given to women, often the most vulnerable members of poor families and the most affected by poverty. Some of the programmes launched in South Asian countries had been successful in providing financing to poor women so that they could improve the situation of their families and raise their own status in society. Such programmes needed to be widened to involve a greater number of women.

101. Poverty alleviation had been one of the priority objectives of all the major conferences held by the United Nations during the preceding five years, especially the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, the official documents of which reflected the international consensus reached concerning the principles, goals and commitments that should be undertaken to reduce and eradicate poverty. The Copenhagen Declaration in particular stressed the role the international community must play, providing increasing support for the elimination of poverty in the least developed countries. The Eighth Meeting of Heads of State or Government of the countries members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), held at New Delhi in May 1995, had also reaffirmed the Association's commitment to the eradication of poverty in South Asia, preferably by the year 2000, by means of an agenda for action.

102. Miss WAFIK (Egypt) said that in the most recent major international conferences held under United Nations auspices, the accent had been on human development, a concept that differed from the concept of economic development. It was well known that growth rates had had no effect on poverty levels, but had in fact fostered the economic inequality from which many societies suffered. There was abundant evidence that in many cases more importance was attached to the material aspects of development than to its human dimension. Some countries, including Egypt, had made parallel and analogous progress in both those aspects of development. Her delegation had been using the term "sustainable human development" since it had first appeared in a UNDP document. Similarly, despite its reservations as to the methodology used to prepare the Human Development Report each year, Egypt recognized how important the Report was in drawing the attention of the international community to the increasingly important role of changing human development.

103. Her delegation noted with interest the report contained in document A/50/330, which reflected concerns about human resource development. It should be noted that the unemployment rate had increased in many countries despite growth in gross domestic product, suggesting that other forces were at work in the current development model which the developing countries were trying to follow. If those forces were not taken into account when development measures were adopted or policies formulated, they could contribute to even greater inequality in terms of income and access to information, in the developed countries as well as in the developing countries.

104. As Egypt attached great importance to the human aspect of development, it was making considerable investments in the education and health sectors, as shown by the creation of a Ministry of Development Management and a Ministry of Housing and Family Planning, which had not traditionally been included in the Egyptian cabinet. It had also established a social fund with the aim of providing assistance in the area of job creation and vocational retraining, within the framework of economic reforms and structural adjustment programmes.

105. It was no less important to formulate comprehensive and wide-ranging strategies for human resource development that did not neglect the environment, and to consider the cultural factors that contributed to cohesion, stability and balance. To ignore those factors on the path to development led to alienation and social strife, with the inevitable result that development strategies which did not take those factors into account failed to achieve their objective.

106. The strengthening and revitalization of the role of the United Nations in general, and of the programmes and funds responsible for operational activities in particular, were essential to the promotion of human development in developing countries. The latter required that additional financial resources should be made available, especially as the developing countries could not count on any rapid improvement in their situation, given the current trends which characterized the new international economic order and which affected their aspirations for just and sustainable development.

107. The further development of human resources required that government policies should be drawn up and regularly evaluated to ensure they were implemented for the benefit of society as a whole. To that end, it was

necessary to take into account specific socio-economic indicators that reflected local conditions and needs, so as to be able to keep track of the progress made in achieving economic, social and human development.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

108. After making some announcements about the agenda for the next day's meetings, the CHAIRMAN reminded delegations of the need to stay within the agreed time-limits when delivering their statements.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.